

THE 1⁴⁰
HISTORY
OF A
YOUNG LADY
OF
DISTINCTION:

In a Series of LETTERS.

In TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

In nuptials blest each loose desire we shun,
Nor time can end what innocence begun.

GARTH.

THIRD EDITION.

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T H E

THE
HISTORY
OF A
YOUNG LADY,

In a Series of LETTERS.

LETTER XXXI.

The MARCHIONESS DE—, to Madame DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,



OW great obligations I am under to you? And what a grateful sense I ought to have of God's mercies? He has made use of your sage counsels, to stop me on the very brink of destruction. I shall not attempt to describe to you the violent emotions I felt on reading your letter; I was covered with a confusion that is not to be described. Surprized and terrified, at what had passed within me, without my knowledge, I made not the least attempt to excuse my weakness. Your letter brought to my mind a thousand things, which, 'till then, had made no impression upon me.

In that instant I was told, the marquis desired to see me; but I was not fit to appear; shame, confu-

sion, fear, and grief, were painted in my countenance, and I would have hid myself, if possible, even from the light of the sun. I sent word to the marquis, that I was greatly indisposed, and desired him to excuse me to the company, for I was told, some ladies were come to visit me.

My husband, greatly alarmed, ran to my closet: I had but just time to conceal your letter; and being unable to bear the sight of that dear husband, I fell senseless on the floor. He immediately called up the family; and when I came to myself, I found I was in bed, surrounded by my physician, the marquis, my sister, the count, and young Mastrilli. I had no sooner cast my eyes on the last, than, being unable to bear the emotions occasioned by his presence, I cried out, and covered my face with my hands, to hide me from their sight. I imagined they could see into my heart, and had discovered sentiments there, which, 'till that time, I had concealed even from myself. I entreated my husband to send all the company away, and remained alone with him, and the physician. I was a little feyish, and they would have bleded me on the spot; but I so earnestly intreated they would leave me to my repose 'till the morrow, that they consented. The marquis was under the greatest concern for my condition, and tho' I assured him I was better, and wanted nothing but rest, he would not leave me, but passed the night, in an easy chair, by my bedside. What a painful night was this! What conflicts! What reproaches! Not that I hesitated, a moment to renounce for ever the sight of Mastrilli, whom I cannot think of without trembling. But, dear mother, whilst my will consented to this sacrifice, my heart was rent in pieces. I had not been able before that time, to comprehend the meaning of what St. Paul says, when he complains, that he had two wills within him, which were continually warring with each other. That night I cruelly experienced it.

This renouncing what is most dear to us, is, I think, a resemblance of what the soul undergoes, in

in the moment of its separation from the body. Mastrilli offered himself to one of my two wills, in the most moving manner ; the other repulsed him, with a detestation, I cannot express. I pretended, at first, to be asleep, that I might be the less observed. But, thro' the violence of the conflict I underwent, I shook from head to foot, I was all over in a cold sweat, and they saw the palpitations of my heart thro' the bed-cloaths. The marquis knew not what to think of my condition. He got up every moment to see how I was, tho' I intreated him not to disturb me.

My greatest embarrassment was to determine what I should do to avoid seeing Mastrilli any more. I thought it would have an odd appearance if I desired my husband to break off acquaintance with him, without assigning any reason for it ; and, yet, I would sooner have died, than suffer the confusion of seeing him again. This last danger appearing to me the worst, I determined with myself to run all risques, even to the losing the count's good opinion. That worthy friend is as free here, as in his own house ; who, in the morning, having found the marquis greatly dejected, he conjured him to take an hour's rest, promising he would not leave me. Full of the design I had meditated, I intreated my husband to yield to the count's request, assuring him I was much better ; and, indeed, I was much easier, from the moment I had conceived the means of avoiding the sight of Mastrilli.

No sooner was the marquis departed, than, with a trembling voice, I begged the count to do me a piece of service I should never forget as long as I lived. It is, said I, to contrive some means of getting Signor Mastrilli into the country, and of detaining him there some days. I shall take that opportunity of going with my sister to the convent : And, do you make the best of it to persuade young Mastrilli to leave Turin, and let me never see him again, I conjure you.

During these words, the count stood like a statue, and instead of making me any answer, he burst out

into this exclamation. How amiable is virtue! Afterwards, seeming confused at what he had let drop; you shall be obeyed, madam, said he; I conceive, you cannot help being concerned at the sight of a man, who is the innocent cause of the persecution your sister suffers from the marquis. These last words of the count made me a little easy: It is possible, he might not discover my motives: But, I deceive myself! His first emotion betrayed him, he knows my weakness, and, I shall never see him without blushing. But what will my *seeming* to be culpable signify, if I am not so in *reality*! Would to God, that to expiate my crime, I need only acknowledge my fault to the whole universe, I would not hesitate the doing it one moment.

My husband could not be absent from me long, and, at his return, found me much better. I felt as if an enormous weight had been taken off my breast, and my weary faint body gave way to sleep. When I awaked, my mind was in so perfect a calm, as is scarce conceivable after so violent a tempest. There remained a sense of shame and confusion, in the presence of God, which I hope I shall preserve during my whole life. I flatter myself, that my heart was innocent in his sight, it had no share in the surprizal of my senses. I loved, without being conscious of it, without designing it; and, but for you, perhaps, I had remained ignorant of the disease. 'till it had been too late to apply any remedy. What a lesson will this be to me for the future! Without doubt, God has punished me for the severity, with which I judged of others.

That woman seemed to me inexcusable, who suffered herself to be surprized by love. I treated, as Chimeras, all I had been told of unforeseen passions. Alas! my will had always acted in concert with my reason, without revolt of my senses, or shew of opposition. I knew myself virtuous, but then I did not consider, I never had any temptation to be otherwise. What an error was I in! I am now thoroughly sensible, what little dependance I ought to make on my

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my own strength ; and I will, for the future, appear in the presence of God, like a fearful child, that dares not quit its mother, and hides itself in her bosom, at the least noise it hears.

About five o'clock in the evening, the marquis came and informed me that Signor Mastrilli was going away. The excuse he has made for so precipitate a departure, is, that business of importance requires his presence at Naples: But I know the true reason, and am sensible of the count's zeal to oblige me. May God reward him for this good action, and grant him that peace of mind, which I have recovered through his care: May he long preserve to me, my dear mother ; or rather let him not suffer me to live without her, exposed to the dangers which surrounded me.

I am, &c.



MADAME DU MONTIER.

LETTER XXXII.

Madame du MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS, her daughter.

Dear Child,

If I could have died with joy, I should have expired the moment I read your letter. How edified am I, at the conflicts you have suffered, to which you have put so glorious an end! God leads you, as it were, by the hand; and this trial only was wanting to compleat your virtue.

I am persuaded as well as you, that you are innocent in the sight of God. That father of mercy, who knows the violence of our passions, will not be offended at the involuntary emotions they raise in us: He desires no more of us than to oppose them: And this St. Paul experienced, when, *he groaned, that he was obliged, without ceasing, to destroy the old man.* But you have had proof of the assistance that God gives, on such occasions, to those who combat with their whole strength. The profound calm you recovered, when you least expected it, is the reward, which that God of goodness has promised to the victorious. Compare, my dear child, what you have now suffered, with the inevitable torments which would have ensued from that passion, if you had given it time to fortify itself; and you will agree, that it is more easy to resist the passions, than basely to yield them the victory: Whosoever hesitates on such occasions, doubles his affliction; but, if with a determined resolution he sets about the work, he will soon reap the fruits of his labour. The passions rise up only against those who faintly oppose them, but to a vigorous defence, they are sure to submit. He, who is under a necessity of plucking nettles, avoids their sting, only by seizing them boldly, whilst

he,

he, who goes to gather them gently and cautiously, is stung by them. So it is with renouncing vice; it becomes the more painful, if we proceed with faintness and irresolution.

You are not the only one, dear child, who can accuse herself of the want of charity to the foibles of others. How many women are there, who having never felt the uproar of the senses, think they have a right, without mercy, to condemn those, who have suffered love to steal into their hearts? They do not consider, that their wisdom is not very meritorious, if it has no other source but that of constitution, or the want of opportunity. A woman thinks she is justified in despising an unfortunate creature, who yielded only from being in a critical situation; when *she*, perhaps, would have done the same, in the like circumstances. Let us sincerely pity those, who stray from the path of their duty; but let us avoid an insolent comparison with ourselves, and not say with the proud pharisee: *I thank the Lord that I am not like other men.* I make no scruple to tell thee, child, that in my opinion, such a pride renders us more culpable in the sight of God, than the most shameful irregularities. But God forbid I should aim to justify vice: No, we cannot entertain too great a detestation of it. I would have them hate and despise the crime, without decrying the criminal; and that every one should say within herself, she has done no more than I might have been guilty of, if God had abandoned me. I could wish, at the sight of the crimes of others, we should be moved with compassion towards *them*, with terror to *ourselves*, and with gratitude to the *Almighty*; to him give the glory, for the tranquillity we enjoy, and the victories we have obtained. If we were of such a disposition of mind, we should not in mentioning the conduct of others, make use of those endless *Jeremiahs*; those arrogant lamentations over the vices of the age in general, and which always conclude with the vices of particular persons. This is the fault of those, above all others, whose employment is devotion, and yet who are as far from being

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being devout, as earth from heaven. The gall of slander flows from their lips: And they think they are upon such good terms with the Almighty, that without offence they may be dispensed with from keeping any charitable measures with man. You will for the future avoid that rock, my dear child, by calling to mind on such occasions, the great dangers which God in his mercy preserved you from.

If I had less knowledge of the count, I should blame you for placing so great confidence in him: But I excuse it on account of the critical situation of your affairs. In conflicts of this kind, flight alone can secure the victory, and you ought to obtain it, how dear soever it cost you. Your sentiments were not unknown to the count, and as he had discovered them, it was necessary also he should be a witness of your triumph. Who knows, whether it may not, even, be productive of his cure? Where a heart has been able to resist an inclination which has arisen involuntarily, there is no reason to believe it will deliberately surrender to another. And this the count will certainly suggest to himself. Ask no questions about the means he used to prevail on Mastrilli to leave Turin, and do not shew the least curiosity on that account.

Write to me immediately, upon receipt of this letter; for I am greatly uneasy with respect to your health, which I conjure you to be careful of: Above all, let me have no dejection of spirits; for you have, certainly, the greatest reason to return God thanks for his mercies.

LET.



LETTER XXXIII. (a)

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

WE are now come to the catastrophe of our piece, and I am afraid it will end in a very cruel manner to me; I have punctually obeyed the orders you gave me in relation to my rival; I have given up my husband's recovery to the care of the count; and he, in order to prevent the uneasiness that affair might cause me, has concealed from me the means he takes for that purpose. I was therefore greatly surprized to see the marquis come home last night in so angry a mood as he did. He shut himself up in his chamber, and walked backward and forward the room, in the greatest agitation. I thought I heard him mention the count's name several times; and, which surprized me the more, as I knew he was alone. About an hour afterwards, the marquis seemed to be a little composed. He wrote a few lines, directed them to his friend, and immediately went out. As I knew the catastrophe was at hand, I felt a perturbation which I cannot describe; but which greatly abated, when I found he had wrote to the count; for whom I wait with the utmost impatience, and will not finish my letter 'till I have talked with him.

The marquis and the count are returned home, and we have supped together. My husband at first appeared to be thoughtful and under some confusion; but the count's friendly and obliging behaviour, soon brought him to his natural disposition. How great a desire soever I had, to have a little conversation with the count, I could not possibly get an opportunity for

(a) There are some letters lost between this and the foregoing.

for that purpose, but was obliged to wait 'till the next morning.

Before we arose from table we received a billet from my sister ; she has been very much indisposed all day, and desires to see me to-morrow morning. The count has taken that opportunity, and hopes I will give him leave to accompany me, as he has not seen my sister since she went into the (a) convent, there seemed nothing extraordinary in this request. I looked upon the marquis, who begins to be a little reconciled to the poor girl, and he bid me accept his friendly offer. I could wish, added he, the count would speak to her in private, perhaps he may succeed better than we have done, and may be able to find out the cause of her unaccountable behaviour.

We set out to-day at six o'clock in the morning, I had not closed my eyes the whole night, neither had the count, as he told me. The cure is compleat-ed, said he, giving me his hand to get into the coach ; but we had a very dangerous crisis. When we were seated, that worthy friend communicated to me what follows.

Soon after Rose was delivered of her child, Gerhard pressed her to break off with the marquis. She excused herself, on pretence of being afraid of a dis-covery. Her lover's affection, she said, was greatly increased since she had brought him a son ; and she was fearful, lest the real cause for a rupture, in such circumstances, should be found out. Gerhard, who had his orders, threatened to leave her, and the fear of losing him, induced the miserable creature to run all hazards. What is not the human heart capable of, when it obeys the dictates of a violent passion ? Oaths, religion itself, every thing is made subservient to the gratifying it. Rose had a very bad time in her lying-in ; and she pretended to the marquis, to be touched with a sense of her condition, and seem'd desirous of returning to the paths of virtue. The poor marquis, who, notwithstanding his disorderly

life,

(a) Probably an account was given in the letters that are wanting, of her going into the convent.

life, is religiously inclined, was scrupulous of preventing the girl's conversion. The disposition of mind he thought her in, augmented his esteem, and consequently his love; and this occasioned the conflicts he suffered, and the melancholy he gave himself up to, which caused me so great uneasiness.

The count, who, with indignation, saw the conflicts he underwent, on account of so despicable a creature, was resolv'd to open his eyes: He proposed to him to go and sup with one of the prettiest girls in the city; and the marquis, willing to divert his trouble, accepted the proposal. They went together, in the count's coach, in the close of the day. Judge of my husband's astonishment, when he saw the coach stop at the door of his mistress's lodgings. Where have you brought me? said he to the count, in a trembling accent. Where I promised you, answered his friend. My rascal of a valet, has made a conquest of this girl, who might have been a very pretty amusement for a gentleman. I discovered the intrigue by means of one of my servants, whom Gerhard has honoured with his confidence, and I have made myself merry with the thought of spoiling the dog's supper. The marquis was in the greatest amazement at this declaration; and, after a moment's silence, said to the count, your coachman must have certainly made a mistake: I am very well acquainted with the young lady that lives in the house, and would be responsible for her conduct, and sentiments; she knows herself better than to hold any commerce of that nature, with a servant; and, if I were to tell you her name, you would agree with me that there *must* be some mistake. It cannot possibly be, answered the count: It is true, I have not the least acquaintance with the girl; but Gerhard's confidant is my coachman, and he knows the house too well to mistake it: However, my dear marquis, if you have any connection with the lady, believe me we had better not to endeavour to clear up the mystery, but return home, and not to expose yourself to be undeceived, in an affair, which affords you some amusement.

ment. You do not know what you say, count, answered the marquis ; but I think I can trust you : In plain terms, then, I love this girl, and my ease and quiet are concerned in clearing up the suspicions you have raised in my mind ; do not leave me therefore, I conjure you.

Saying these words, they got out of the coach ; the count's footman ascended a private stair-case ; and, as he had the key of the apartment, in which Mrs. Rose and Gerhard were very comfortably in bed together, the marquis, was then convinced by his own eyes, of the reality of a treachery which he would never have suspected. He upbaaided that wretch in the manner she deserved ; and, she, without being in the least disconcerted, told the marquis, she was in bed with her husband, and desired he would not be troublesome ; for if he did, she should find a way to make him repent it. The impudent manner in which she expressed herself, raised the fury of the marquis to the highest pitch ; but Gerhard, who could scarce keep up his courage, tho' his master was present, took his resolution upon the spot : Not so fast, good madam, said he, I am not your husband yet ; and by God's grace I never shall ; I am forry you have obliged me to tell you my mind so bluntly : But I am very angry at your insolence to the gentleman, which has laid open to me your character. At these words the poor wretch was as if she had been thunder-struck.

The marquis, after having treated her as she deserved, hastily went away without his friend, came home, and shut himself up in his chamber. Upon reflecting on what had passed, he thought it seemed to him very evident, that the whole scene had been planned by the count ; and forgetting the great obligations he had to that friend, he wrote him a letter, desiring him to meet him in a private place, to give him satisfaction for his ungentleman-like behaviour. The count came to the place appointed, but too wise to be offended at such a challenge, he gave the marquis's choler time to evaporate ; then told him, very plainly,

A YOUNG LADY. 145

plainly, he would never fight with him ; and as a proof of it, he was come without a sword. The marquis, at length, became capable of hearing reason ; and the count brought him to acknowledge, that he had acted as a real friend, through the whole affair.

We are yet unacquainted, with what my husband intends to do, in relation to Mrs. Rose ; and our uneasiness on that account has greatly shortened our visit to my sister. How greatly is she altered, dear mother ? She drew tears from me, and the count could not help shedding some ; we both used our utmost endeavours to persuade her to open her heart to us, but she is obstinately silent, and desires no other favour, than your permission to take the habit of a nun. But you know I cannot give her any hope, in that respect. I promised I would visit her again to-morrow, and we made all the haste to come home we possibly could. The marquis went out in the morning as early as we did, and has left word for the count to meet him in the church of St. Charles.

I am now left alone, and given up to my reflections ; they are very melancholy ones ; and above all, I tremble for fear lest the marquis should suspect me, of being concerned in the late transaction. He, and the count, are returned : But the post being just going out, I have only time to send away my letter, and cannot inform you of what shall happen, 'till another opportunity.



LETTER XXXIV.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

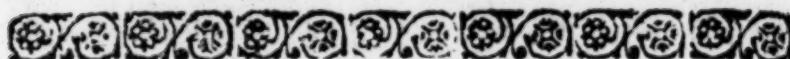
I AM persuaded, that before you receive this letter, you will enjoy perfect tranquillity. Only the first moments were to be dreaded ; and thanks to the count's great prudence, every thing has fallen out to our wishes. How valuable a treasure is such a friend ! And how sorry I am, that he is the victim of a passion which makes him miserable. I hope, however, he will overcome it ; and that after having laboured hard, to bring about the happiness of his friends, he will at last do something for himself. Rose is a wicked girl, and I have no longer the least compassion for her. This last stroke of her's has finished her picture ; and her heart must be hypocritical. This, in my opinion, is the utmost extent of guilt : And I am seized with an indignation, which I am not mistress of, when I see people attempting to make use of religion as a cloak for vice. This girl will certainly come to a bad end. And when your husband coolly reflects on her character, he will be sensible from what heavy bondage he has been delivered. I exhort you, dear child, to put yourself under the guidance of the Divine Providence, in respect to the consequences of this affair : And I have great hopes that it will be terminated to your advantage.

I desire you will be very careful not to give your sister the least reason to believe you will ever consent to her taking the vows of a nun. No encouragement should be given to her desires in that respect. Let us recommend that poor child into the hands of the Almighty, and earnestly intreat him to instruct and guide her, since by her obstinately persevering in

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in keeping silence, she puts it out of our power to lend her any other assistance. I must own to you that her present situation greatly imbitters my life; but, persuaded, as I am, that we are poor blind creatures, incapable of judging wisely what things are fittest for us, I bear up under it, by continually reflecting, that out of this dismal situation, God can produce blessings for us, which we could not, even, dare to hope for. Visit that dear girl as often as you can: Endeavour to reconcile her to your husband, and assure her, that she shall not be constrained in the manner of life she chuses; but that we only desire time to be convinced of her inclinations. I wait with great impatience for the issue of this affair. But, be the event as it may, I trust upon your constancy and resignation to whatever it shall please God to determine.





LETTER XXXV.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to MADAME DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

IT is impossible for me to express to you the terrible situation I have been in, since my last letter. I have had great occasion to call to mind your wholesome advice, and to recommend myself every moment to the Divine Providence. This, I assure you, is the only way to mitigate the greatest troubles, and, but for this, I think I should have sunk under mine.

My husband and the count returned, just as I was making up my last letter: They both seemed to be in great perplexity and confusion, and went out immediately after dinner. They did not return 'till near five o'clock; and when they were just seated, a servant came to acquaint me, there was a lace-woman at the door, who had brought some fine Brussels for me to look at. I would have put her off 'till the next day, but my husband ordered her to be admitted. Judge of our surprize, when the woman laid down, at the door of my apartment, a covered basket, upon which, was a letter unsealed, and made off as fast as she could. We looked upon each other with astonishment; but the cry of a child, which we all heard very plainly, made me shriek out, and running to the basket, I opened it, and found therein a little boy, as beautiful as an angel, who stretched out his little hands to me, as if to implore my assistance. My husband sat motionless in his chair, and the count went up to him, and whispered something in his ear. For my part, without regarding what passed between them, I was kissing and fondling the little innocent, who is the very picture of my husband. I cried out that a nurse must be got for

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for the child immediately; and that instant, I saw the letter, which was quite open. It contained a detail of the marquis's intrigue, filled with the most indecent expressions against him; and concluded with advising me not to trust a husband, who made a sport of seduction, lying, and the most heinous crimes. When I had read this impudent libel, I tore it in pieces, threw it on a chair, and repeated my little tendernesses to the child.

The marquis, who had fixed his eyes upon me, without stirring from his place, arose and picked up the pieces of the torn letter, and made an attempt to go out. I perceived it, and laying down the child on a couch, I approached him, and without being able to utter a word, I pressed him in my arms. He disengaged himself from my embraces, took my hand, which he kissed and wetted with his tears: He then quitted the room without saying a word; and the count sensible of what great importance it was, not to leave him in that critical juncture, followed him. I was then left alone with the child, and calling one of my women, I put it into her care, and charged her to be secret.

The revenge this artful creature purposed to take of the marquis, was, doubtless, this, she flattered herself with the wicked hope of separating us, but I begin to perceive, that the effects of her artifice, will, in the conclusion, fall only on her own head. When I had delivered the little innocent creature up to the care of my woman, I enquired which way my husband and the count went, and was told, they took our coach, which returned in about an hour, having left them in the suburbs of the Po. I am now under the most fearful apprehensions of their executing some cruel vengeance on the wretch, who has been the author of so much trouble and uneasiness.

This evening I received a letter from the count, who desires me to be under no fears. They have been absent two days, and, notwithstanding the count's request, I have been greatly alarmed. But judge how much I was frightened, to see the count return alone.

What have you done with the marquis, said I, and why do you appear here without him? Be under no concern, madam, answered the count, your husband is not far off; but he thinks himself so highly culpable for his late behaviour to you, that he dares not come into your presence, 'till he is assured of your pardon. And could not you have been answerable to him for that, said I to the count? But, let us this instant, go to my husband, that he may be witness of the joy I feel, at his return to virtue. You need not go far, said the count, smiling, and immediately my chamber door was opened, and my husband fell at my feet before I could prevent him. Load me with reproaches, said that dear man, to me, your goodness has aggravated my crime; and it would, I think, be some consolation to me, if you treated, according to his deserts, the most guilty of men. I made no other answer to the marquis, but by clasping him in my arms, and endeavouring to raise him up. The count was so affected at this scene, that he shed tears; ours flowed abundantly; and it is impossible to describe to you the conflicts that passed in that happy moment. The count informed my husband how far I had carried my discretion; and assured him, I was no stranger, to the intrigue, from its commencement. The marquis was in the greatest confusion at hearing this, and said, he could not think of his folly without detesting himself.

He has been employed, these two or three days, in procuring the abandoned Rose to be confined a close prisoner, and spight of the misfortunes she has been the cause of, I pity her sincerely. May I not venture to ask leave of the marquis to see her? And do you think it will be impossible to bring her back to the paths of virtue?

I think it is my lot never to enjoy any happiness without alloy. The count has found the means to speak to me in private. I am too happy, madam, said he, in being able to restore to you the heart of a beloved husband; but it is high time to think of my own quiet. Not that by flying from you, I can hope to

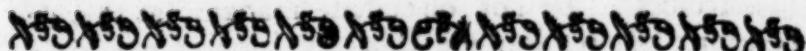
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to wrest from my heart, the fatal shaft that drinks its dearest blood. Be not offended, madam, at this declaration, but pardon me this repetition of my crime, (for so I fear you'll think it) as this is the last moment I shall ever gaze on that dear face, and then, adieu for ever. I have made no efforts to obtain a cure, being convinced they had be useles all; the utmost I could do, was silently to bear my pains, locked up within my breast; but now they urge their passage with such force, that opposition is vain: I should displease you every moment by my presence, and add to my load of guilt, but not obtain the least increase of happiness. I have nothing now to ask, but your leave to depart, and that your husband be kept a stranger to my unhappy passion. This I hope will be granted me, as your repose and mine so much depend upon it. Saying these words, he arose, and left me in so great confusion, that I could not utter a word.

The poor count has shewed me, that his departure is very near; and I am of opinion it will not be proper for me to endeavour at preventing it, after so explicit a declaration: And yet, I must confess, I have a strong temptation to it. What can I have to fear from a heart so truly virtuous as his? I shall expect your answer with impatience, and be greatly pleased if it corresponds with my wishes, as they arise only from motives of gratitude, for the many obligations I have received from him. However, I do not expect, my dear mother, you should make me any allowances; for whatever you ordain, shall be obeyed by,

Your dutiful daughter.

L E T.



LETTER XXXVI.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS, her daughter.

Dear Child,

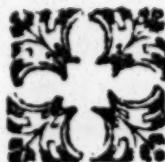
I Readily foresaw, that the marquis would not long continue his irregular course of life, more especially, after you trusted your concerns in the hand of so sincere a friend, as the count, whom I greatly esteem and pity. You have too great obligations to him, my dear, to oppose his departure. Absence is the only remedy for his disease, and yet the malady seems so deeply rooted, that it is doubtful, whether even that will be efficacious. He is indeed so good a friend, that you cannot hope to repair the loss; but you ought to prefer *his* interest to your *own*. Besides, how virtuous soever the count may be, he is a man, and also a lover. And the greatest profligacy must tremble at the sight of so violent a passion. If you should take the least step to engage the count to stay, he would be authorized to fail in his respect to you every moment. Spight of himself, he would entertain hopes, which would increase his passion, and render him either the most miserable, or the most criminal of mankind. 'Tis a terrible alternative, to which all such as cherish a guilty love are reduced. The heart of man is in the hand of God; he increases the courage of those who fight on the side of virtue; and we need not doubt but he will reward the count, for the generous resolution he has just taken. Earnestly beg it of God in fervent prayers; for gratitude binds you so to do.

You are deceived, my dear, when you imagine Rose is capable of a happy return to virtue. Even a miracle of mercy would scarce suffice to convert such

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such a heart as her's. Her crimes were not altogether the effects of an amorous constitution ; but of a boundless ambition ; she committed them coolly and deliberately ; to the most criminal libertinism, she added, dissimulation, hypocrisy and artifice ; a conduct that shews a soul, hardened in iniquity. Pray for her conversion, prevail on the marquis, if you can, to treat her with mildness, but let her continue in the solitude, where she is confined, which is very proper for her at present : Get information how she behaves herself ; and if she appears to be affected with a due sense of her guilt, then I would have you endeavour to obtain from your husband, the means of settling her in some way of life. I approve of the care you have taken of the little innocent. He is not blameable for the crime which gave him birth.

Adieu, dear child : You do not mention a word of your sister, and I am very uneasy at the poor girl's situation.





LETTER XXXVII.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame DU MONTIER, her mother.

From the Novalese, the 4th of July.

Dear Mother,

YOU will certainly be surprized when you see whence this letter is dated. I doubt not but you supposed us to be still at Turin, and by the time this comes to hand, we shall be at our country house, to which my husband has just been banished. The thoughts of which afflict me greatly. This disgrace happening at the very time he thought his favour was fixed on the firmest basis, has quite overwhelmed him, and I fear he will sink under the grief it has occasioned him. The day before yesterday, he went to court to pay his duty, according to custom, and received many civilities from the king and queen. The next day at nine o'clock he received orders to depart, and was allowed but four and twenty hours to settle his affairs. The count, who shares his grief, was this morning at the king's levee, and had the courage to speak to him in our behalf, but his majesty stopped him short, by a very angry look, and turned away from him. The queen seemed to be concerned at the news, at least the count thought he observed it in her looks, when she was beset by the marchioness de St. G—, who seemed to triumph over our misfortune. The count is persuaded she has contributed to it, and I am of the same opinion. But what the most afflicts me, is, that I am the innocent cause of her malice against the marquis. That woman has always hated me, tho' I never gave her the least cause for it, and her displeasure was manifest, whenever the queen shewed me the least favour. As

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my husband and I have been ready to serve every body, I expected to see all those who called themselves our friends, involved in our disgrace; but all the world have abandoned us, except the count: They seem to look on us as persons infected with the plague, and as if they dreaded our approach; and I have been informed, that several ladies, who had behaved with remarkable civility to me, have inveighed most bitterly against me. Good god! Is this the court? Is it possible falsehood should be carried to so great a length? Our disgrace has even reached the count, who is looked upon as a ruined man, and the courtiers begin already to turn their backs upon him; but this he assures me does not give him the least disquietude. He remains at court in hopes only of doing us some service, at least to discover what we are accused of; and he has protested to the marquis, that disgusted with an ocean so subject to tempests, he will soon forsake it.

Permit me, dear mother, to tell you my sentiments on this occasion, for to you alone I dare disclose my mind. I cannot look on this as an unhappy event. I sincerely share the marquis's trouble, and am sorry, to leave a princess, who was so very good and gracious to me. But in other respects, I repeat the song of the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt; and I think I shall never regret the onions of that land of exile. The marquis has a large estate, very sufficient to provide for our little family: God, who best knows what is fittest for us, has, out of his mercy, suffered this disgrace to befall us, and would preserve my children from the contagious air of a court. Who can tell, but he has thought fit to make use of it, to wean the marquis's affections from this world! For this I offer my sincere prayers to God; my happiness would be compleat, if the marquis would consider and view the glory of this world, in the same point of view with me: He would soon bless the shipwreck that brings us safe to our port.

In this hurry and confusion of our departure, the count has undertaken to fetch my sister from the convent,

vent, and conduct her to the Novalese. She has paid her respects to the marquis, who had not seen her since she went to the nunnery. It is your own fault, said he to her, that you were not well settled in the world, before my disgrace; you would not then have been under a necessity of leading so solitary and retired a life. My sister answered him with the greatest cheerfulness and cordiality, that she esteemed herself infinitely more happy, to share with him in his exile, than to live in the greatest court in the world. My husband was delighted with her answer, and clasping her in his arms, assured her, he should never forget that mark of her affection to him. When we took leave of the count, we shed many sincere tears. He asked leave to embrace my sister, and, whether I am deceived or not, I cannot say, but I thought I saw him give her some of those looks, which he had so frequently bestowed on me. But what surprises me to the greatest degree, is, that he has entreated the marquis not to dispose of her, 'till a year be fully accomplished. My sister blushed at these words, but, thro' her confusion, I could perceive a secret joy, that furnished me with much matter for reflection. And, indeed, I am very impatient to speak to her in private, that I may find out this riddle.

In about an hour's time, we shall pass mount Cenis, which, they assure me, I shall scarce know again: In my next, I will give you a description of it: It is most intolerably hot here, and notwithstanding our masques, we are quite broiled by the sun. And, the worr of it is, we are forced to go in those nasty chairs, which I heretofore described to you, in which we are expos'd to the open air. I promised the chairmen double their fare to carry us round by the high road, which is further about, but safer. The chairmen were transported with joy at the mention of the word double fare. And the marquis said to me, with a sigh, these poor creatures are a thousand times more happy than we are. They are strangers to grandeur, and to disgraces, and when they can make a small addition to their daily earnings, they

think

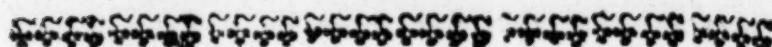
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think themselves the happiest men in the world. God grant that this first shoot of philosophy may grow to maturity in him ; and may the divine mercy, instead of those transitory and deceitful blessings he has just been deprived of, bestow on him peace and comfort, which fly the gilded roof, and take refuge under the thatch in the humble cot.

I forgot to tell you, that the marquis received a little consolation, when we passed by Rivol ; which is a castle, where the king's father was a long time kept a prisoner. That example of the instability of human grandeur, serves, without doubt, to sweeten the bitterness of his present situation.





LETTER XXXVIII.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

I AM as much surprized at your disgrace, as I am edified by your sentiments, in respect to the grandeur and vanities of this world. 'Tis a fashion that passeth away, as you now find by experience, and they, whose attachment to it, has been as great, as yours has been the contrary, will have a much more terrible conviction of it in the hour of death. I hope our dear marquis will entertain the like sentiments; and perhaps, this is the moment, which God, in his mercy, hath appointed to make him fully sensible of the true value of favour, dignities and honours.

You have acquired but a very small knowledge of a court, or you would not expect to preserve many friends there, after being disgraced. The courtier generally makes every thing subservient to his ambition. Being a slave to his master's inclination, he willingly bends the knee to the idol in power, and scruples not to renounce his father, if he thinks by that means he can ingratiate himself with his sovereign. How many men, intoxicated with the respect and submissions paid them, on the score of their being in favour, are in the same condition with the ass loaded with reliques, who appropriated to himself, the incense that was offered to his burden, and who was amazed at the contempt shewn him, so soon as they had taken off his load.

I am not at all surprized at the count's generosity. A man of his sentiments cannot stoop to be a time-server. This may perhaps prejudice him, for the present, in the king's opinion: But, be assured, that

prince,

prince, who is equitable, will have a greater esteem for him, when those prejudices are removed. Princes, who are accustomed, from their infancy, to see those who approach them, cringe and flatter, are irritated at the least opposition to their will, how unjust soever it may be; but in their hearts they cannot help esteeming the man, who is bold enough to withstand their caprices. Sooner, or later, your husband's innocence will be manifested: And the prince will be pleased with the count for not deserting you. Your father is writing a letter to the marquis, to testify his great affliction for his disgrace, to which I shall add a line or two. In the mean time, convince him how greatly I lay to my heart, every misfortune that befalls him.

What you tell me, relating to your sister, surprizes me, and I am afraid the count has discovered her secret: Endeavour to prevail on her to be explicit with you, and let us leave the issue to Providence. I dare not give way to the pleasing ideas that arise in my mind; but I assure you, it would be a very agreeable thing to me, to find that the count has the same affection for her, as he had for you. I do not consider either his rank or fortune; his virtue alone would make me look upon an alliance with him as the greatest happiness, tho' he were in a much lower condition than herself.

I make no doubt but the marchioness de St. G—, had a principal share in your exile: The queen, who had no reason to love her, perhaps, took a pleasure in mortifying her, in shewing, upon every occasion, the esteem she had for you: But I am mistaken, if her malicious designs do not turn out in the end, to her own confusion. Rely, therefore, on your own innocence, and the friendship of the count.

You mention in your letter the imprisonment of the king's father: Inform me what you know of it, for I have been long desirous to learn the truth of that circumstance in history, which hath been so differently related.

The comparison of the condition of that unfortunate prince, with the situation of those poor people, your chairmen, who were so delighted at the proffered addition to their fare, is a very proper one to shew the real value of honours and dignities. We may allow them to be of some estimation, but it would be a madness to depend on them, and consider them as essential to our happiness!

Let me know, with certainty, whether your banishment is confined to your country house, or if you cannot have the satisfaction of going to Chambery, and revisiting your beloved Savoyard ladies. Your disgrace will not prevent *them* from entertaining you with the greatest cordiality: *They* do not pique themselves in following the customs of the court, and will, I am sure, be delighted to see you restored to them.

Adieu,



L E T.



LETTER XXXIX.

The MARCHIONESS DE——, to Madame du MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

I AM still in an ecstasy at the beauties which have struck my sight. That mount Cenis, which was the object of my terror, has just afforded me the most charming prospect imaginable. The road, by which I went to it, is every where reasonably wide, and one may fall, without fear of rolling into bottomless pits. I should not have known the place again, if I had not been told it was the same where I was so greatly terrified. The sight of an extensive piece of water, made me the more surprized, as in winter there is not the least appearance of it. The turf, enamelled with a thousand different sorts of flowers, which were for the most part unknown to me, at once, agreeably pleased the eye, and filled the air with the sweetest perfumes. In that plain, we felt, at the same time, the various seasons of the year. In the midlt of it, the heat is amazing: The ice and snow, which cover the mountains, wherewith it is surrounded, maintain a perpetual winter; and, when you travel at an equal distance from the foot of the mountains, and the middle of the plain, you enjoy the delights of autumn, and of spring.

I write from Lunebourg, where we are safely arrived, and whence we shall depart in two houts, not for Chambery, but for our estate in the country. The marquis, whose disgrace is ever uppermost in his mind, says, they need not have forbid his going to that city, and protests, that the king shall in vain recal him. He intends to retire to a castle, situated in France; and, as the greatest part of our estate is in that kingdom, he purposes to sell all his lands in

Savoy, and no longer follow a court, in which he has met with such unworthy treatment. I beg of the marquis, to recommend all to the guidance of Providence, and sincerely protest to him, that all places where *he* chuses to live, will be equally agreeable to *me*.

I have not been able to find an opportunity of speaking to my sister ; but she is now writing to you, and her letter, which you will receive with this, will, I hope, inform you of the true reason for the change I suspect.

I am fearful of leaving the marquis alone at this juncture, which obliges me to conclude my letter, without imparting to you, what I have been told, relating to the late king, which I must defer 'till another opportunity.

I am, &c.



L E T.



LETTER XL.

Mademoiselle DU MONTIER to her mother

Dear Mother,

I AM at a loss how to begin laying open my heart to you. Perhaps I ought to blush at the sentiments which have taken full possession of it. And, perhaps, I ought to upbraid myself, for my obstinate silence, to the tenderest of mothers, and the best of sisters. This, however, I must assure you, that it was not the want of confidence in either of you, which induced me to lock up my pains in my own breast. The singularity of my ideas, made me fear communicating them to you, and you will agree that my sister was so nearly concerned, in what I am about to relate, that I dared not inform her of it. However, if you think fit to communicate this letter to her, I have no objection, but rest absolutely on your prudence in that respect.

I cannot pretend to say, but that the reading romances, has given me an uncommon turn of mind; perhaps, a dangerous one; but I cannot, yet, prevail on myself to condemn it. Without corrupting my heart, the reading of them, has, I think, given me an elevation of mind, and strongly determined me, to place my affections on *him*, alone, who should render himself worthy of them, by a manner of thinking quite opposite to the vulgar. I set out in the world with this resolution. And, must confess, that full of these notions, the greatest part of the young lords, that I had opportunity to see, seemed not worthy my notice. I thought them so low, so puerile, compared with the ideas I had formed, that I should have blushed, not only to have loved them, but even to grant them the least portion of my esteem. I soon discovered, how superior the count was to them; the

the generous manner, in which he assisted the marquis, won upon my easy heart. At first I took it only for esteem, but was soon convinced it was love: And, it was to jealousy alone, I owe the first knowledge of that passion.

Before he was become dear to me, his looks betrayed his unhappy love for my sister. That information, far from curing me, compleated the conquest of my heart: He had, by exposing himself for my brother, saved a rival's life; that generosity, made me look upon him, to be the hero, I had so vainly sought after; and, from that moment, I loved him. Custom, I know, requires one of my years to blush at the bare mention of that word; but I cannot help owning to you, that usage, and the ideas I have contracted, are ever thwarting each other. Have we such a command over our own sentiments, that a failure, in any of them, should be imputed to us as a crime? I should have had a *bad* opinion of my heart, if it could not have *esteemed* the count. And, was it in my power to stop just at *esteem*? Love, in my opinion, is only criminal in *vicious* minds. Thanks to your instructions, and my own native pride, I feared no danger from that passion; I cherished it, then, with so much the more satisfaction, as it appeared to me to be the more noble, to love, without hope of return.

The young Mastrilli, spight of the charms of his person, could not shake my constancy, and notwithstanding my natural ambition, his great riches had no allurements with me. The one passion had extinguished the other, and, if the count had been but a shepherd, he would have been the most amiable object in my eye. It was to preserve the liberty of loving him, without restraint, that I got the better of my dislike to the condition of a nun. My love, said I to myself, is so pure, that it has nothing incompatible with a state so innocent.

Hitherto, my dear mother, I have no need to reproach myself, but I am afraid in what remains for me to tell you, I shall not be so easily acquitted.

Anger

Anger made me commit a fault, which I shall ever lament, tho' it had been attended with the greatest success.

When the count informed me of my brother's disgrace, he shewed me a letter from Signor Mastrilli, who, true to the passion I had inspir'd him with, begs the count will use his utmost endeavours to move me to compassionate his love. When I had perused the letter, the count informed me, that Signor Mastrilli had deprived himself of the happiness of seeing me, only with intent to put an end to the persecution I suffered on his account. He expatiated on the greatness of that sacrifice, and exaggerated to me, the love, the merit, the fortune of that lover. Full of displeasure to hear him plead, so warmly, the cause of another, my whole heart stood confessed in my countenance, and giving him a look, which could not be misinterpreted, Oh! count, said I, and do *you* advise me to dispose of a heart At these words I stopped short; and being fully sensible of the consequence of them, my blushes and confusion completely discovered to him, the conquest he had made. During some time we remained in silence; I could not refrain from tears, which flowed abundantly; and the count, seizing my hand, which he kissed, before I was aware of it, It is enough, madam, said he, I conceive you have already disposed of your heart: I reverence your passion, as well as your secrecy; and it is impossible, that the lover, made choice of by a lady of your perfections, can long remain ignorant of his happiness. The count then got up, doubtless with a view that I might have time to recover myself, but I could not possibly forget so imprudent a step; my confusion was manifest during the whole journey, and was greatly augmented, when the count desired my brother, not to dispose of my hand, before the expiration of the year. I could not hide the joy I felt at that request; not that I flatter myself I have inspired the count with love, his passion for my sister, has taken too deep root, I fear, to be easily removed. But, as I shall escape any new persecu-

persecution on that head, I bound my desires, in seeing my heart free from any engagement with another.

I have read over this part of my letter again, and am doubtful whether I shall send it to you. Tho' I can truly say my sentiments have nothing, which should make me blush, yet prejudice, without doubt, and, a something, which I cannot define, cover me with confusion. But I am writing to my good mother; *she* will be indulgent to my weakness, and kindly shew me in what degree I am culpable. I fear, above all, my sister's scrupulous virtue; supposing (I mean) you intend to inform her of my sentiments.

I am, &c.



L E T-



LETTER XLI.

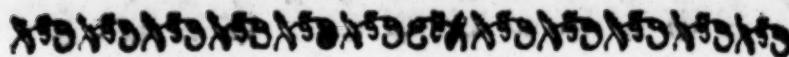
Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

YOU must excuse my writing you only a word or two. I hope your sister will communicate to you, both *her* letter and *my* answer, but let that be voluntary ; and in your answers to her, pursue the method laid down in my letter. I do not know, but the marquis's design of going into France, may be advantageous to you, but, as you justly say, we must trust all our concerns in the hands of Providence. Adieu, dear child, and be indulgent to your sister.



LET-



LETTER XLII.

Madame du MONTIER, to her second daughter.

Dear Child,

I AM greatly pleased with you, for laying open, so candidly, your whole heart to me; and I shall never forget that testimony of your confidence. I shall not answer you like a severe mother, but like a tender and affectionate friend, in which light, I desire you will for the future consider me: But this new quality makes it incumbent on me, to be sincere, and even to hazard your displeasure, in telling you, without disguise, my opinion of your manner of thinking.

Prejudice, you say, and, something you cannot describe, make you blush, involuntarily, at your sentiments. My dear child, listen to that secret voice, it is the voice of nature, which your pernicious reading, has not been able, totally, to silence. I know we are not responsible, for those involuntary sentiments, which rise in our minds; but, lamenting our weakness, we should vigorously oppose their intrusion, and by that means, shall we be sure, in the end, to subdue them. But, you, my dear, are far from being so disposed; your mind, being filled with romantic notions of heroism your are delighted with a passion, which makes your life unhappy, and, in a thousand instances, might have rendered it highly criminal. I do represent things in too strong a light. Platonick love, my dear, is a phantom, which has no existence but in romances. Lucky incidents may for some time save you from guilt, but the moment would come in which you would be lost to virtue: We are not sensible of our danger, 'till we are undone, and then reflection comes too late. What would have become of you, if the count had encouraged

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raged your passion, and at the same time had been an artful deceiver? Certain as you was of his indifference, towards you, did not your heart betray you? Did not you discover your passion to him? What advantage might he not have taken, of such an information? Without doubt, you shudder at the dangers you have exposed yourself to; and, I hope, this will be a useful lesson to you for the future.

Let me advise you never to look again into those books, which have so intoxicated your reason. Endeavour to discover the whole weakness of your heart, and do not put too much confidence in it, but seek assistance in the counsels of a sister, who tenderly loves you. How scrupulous soever her virtue is, you need not fear she will prove a severe censor; true virtue is ever indulgent to the infirmities of others, and it is the part of hypocrites, only, to arm themselves with a malignant zeal. I conjure you, therefore, my dear, to lay open your heart to the marchioness: I shall not be easy 'till you have taken that step. However, I do not command it, but will leave it to your own discretion, as not forgetting that I am speaking to a friend, whom I have no reason to fear of offending.

Adieu, dear child, be assured of my affection, so long as you shall continue to deserve it.



LETTER XLIII.

The MARCHIONESS DE ——, to Madame DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

THE goodness of the divine Providence has manifested itself; in sparing me the grief I should have suffered, at the sight of my dying mistress. The queen of Sardinia is no more! Neither riches, birth, or youth, could save her from an early death. Her excellent constitution seemed to promise a life much longer extended. But, alas! she alone foresaw her end approaching, and which she often mentioned to me in conversation. The count has wrote us word, that she met death with a Christian resignation. She recommended her children to the prince of Piedmont; and I hope he will have the same love and tenderness for *them*, as he had for their mother, who deserved it by the great affection she bore him.

Altho' the king had a great respect and value for her, yet I was ever of opinion she was not happy: She had a fixed antipathy to the disposition of the Piedmontese ladies, and could not prevail on herself to sacrifice truth and sincerity to the tinsel of a court. And, I think, she would still have been more unhappy, if she had not taken a resolution, at first, to maintain the prerogatives of a queen. She was of a very generous spirit, and could not endure any one should approach her, without receiving some marks of her bounty. Once, at a time of the year when flowers were a great rarity, a poor woman made her a present of some very fine ones: She received them very graciously, and ordered ten sequins to be given to the woman. The marquis of —, to whom she gave the order, thought fit to give her majesty a hint, that flowers were not so dear at Turin, as at Lune-

ville,

ville, and assured her, a sequin was full enough. Give her twenty, said the queen, and pray do it this instant, or I shall come up to thirty. This adventure came to the king's ear; and as he has a greatness of soul, he was pleased with his wife's behaviour, and said, that if ten sequins were too much for the woman to receive, they were a small sum for a queen to give; and ever after that time, the marquis of ---- took care never to read her any more lectures of œconomy.

The death of the queen seems to have fixed our situation, and my husband persists in his resolution of retiring into France. We are at this very time at Aix, a little village famous for its mineral waters. We have met with very good company here, (for it is the rendezvous of all the people of distinction in the neighbourhood) and, amongt others, several ladies of Geneva, and a great number of Swiss women. At Turin, I had entertained the common prejudice against that nation, but am thoroughly cured of it. Those people, under a plain outside, conceal a great deal of good sense. Honesty and sincerity are their distinguishing characteristicks; and I see nothing of that gross unpoliteness, which is so commonly attributed to them. For my part, I am very well pleased with their acquaintance, and prefer the candour and good sense, with which their conversation abounds, to the most lively excursions of those we call wits.

The count has not mentioned a word of my sister in his letter, and, I see, by her looks, she is greatly chagrined at his silence, the cause of which, I cannot, indeed, comprehend myself. This, without doubt, has determined her to open her heart to me; for she was ready to burst with vexation. She communicated to me, her letter to you, and your answer, and as she has conjured me to deal freely and openly with her, I made no secret, of the great surprize I was in, at her manner of thinking. It was a favourable moment, for she was too greatly mortified to think of keeping up the heroine; and her tears, which flowed

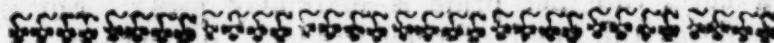
abundantly, plainly shewed her the fallacy of her sentiments. In that moment she was near hating the count ; for she imagines he slighted her, and that she herself has been the occasion of it, by her imprudent behaviour to him. I took no pains to alter her opinion in that respect, but immediately began to suggest to her, proper motives to get the better of her inclinations, and I hope she will observe them.

Amongst the great number of strangers who are here, we have taken notice of a young man, who follows my sister where ever she goes. He lodges in the same house with us ; and the girl, being uneasy at his behaviour, directed one of our servants to find out who he is. The valet, having insinuated himself into his acquaintance, has informed us, that the stranger is a painter, and employed to draw my sister's picture. The marquis sent for him, and pressed him to discover who employed him ; but the painter peremptorily denied, he ever told the servant any such thing ; so that it still remains a mystery.

I was about to conclude my letter, but the marquis has just called me, to let me know, he overheard the conversation between me and my sister. He seems to be delighted at the discovery, and is vexed he acted so roughly to her, on account of Mastrilli. The courage of this girl, who would sacrifice every advantage to her love, appears to him, truly heroical ; and he makes a jest of the fears, I have endeavoured to inspire her with. Would to God, he does not render all we have been doing ineffectual ! However, he has promised me he will not.

I am, &c.

LET.



LETTER XLIV.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

THE fashion of this world, soon passed away, from the sight of your poor queen. Now, all is vanished, and, like the lowest of mortals, she carries with her nothing to the grave, but the good deeds she has done in this life. Happily her manners were pure and unspotted; and, *that*, my dear child, should comfort you for the loss you sustain. God, perhaps, smote her in his mercy, by snatching her away from the perils attending a throne. Perils, almost inevitable: He has taken *you* from the dangers of a court, and seems to have laid *up* for you, many happy days in retirement: Return, therefore, your hearty thanks to the divine goodness, and say, continually, *O God!* my heart is ready, be it unto me, according to thy divine pleasure.

I am delighted to find, that your dear sister is so sensible of the weakness of her heart; it is the only expedient to produce a speedy cure. I have not the least fear for her, now that she has determined to be open and unreserved to you. In *your* counsels she will avoid the perils which surround her.

Conjure the marquis, not to let her know he overheard you. *Your* sentiments and *his*, differ widely in the article of love. Men of high birth require nothing of our sex, but an outside shew of prudence, and do not impute to us as a crime, what they call a harmless affection, provided our affections are irreproachable; as if we could answer for the latter, a single moment, after having suffered a violent passion to take full possession of our hearts.

Your sister's love, must be capable of bearing any test, since, even the count's slights have not wrought a cure, tho' her pride is extremely great. But the passions lose much of their strength, when they come to act against each other. Your father was always of opinion, that, the reading romances, might be useful to young women, by inspiring them with a noble pride, which would preserve them from a vicious passion. For my part, I see no other difference between a vicious and Platonick love, than that which opportunity makes; and this doctrine, I think, ought strongly to be inculcated in our sex.

I cannot comprehend (any more than you) the meaning of the adventure of the picture. But it makes me wish you were well at home; for, I fear, my poor child will have some fresh persecution to undergo.



LETTER XLV.

The MARCHIONESS DE——, to Madame DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

WE have, at last, discovered, who it was employed the painter. The count de Montjoye, the most accomplished nobleman in all Savoy, is in love with my sister, and has asked the marquis's consent to make his addresses to her. I cannot possibly describe my sister's fears, especially when the marquis desired a month's time to consider of it: She has owned to me, that if her affections were not so firmly settled, as they are, she should have received the addresses of that young lord, with great pleasure; but, whatever the consequence may be, she will enter into no engagements.

The advice I give her, in this case, is absolutely ineffectual; it is of no use to tell her, that true heroism consists, in sacrificing inclination to duty; that her passion will expire, when it shall no longer be fed by hope; that God will give a blessing to the efforts she shall make on this occasion; and it is almost certain, that an amiable man, cannot fail of being beloved by a virtuous woman. Her answer is, that she should have a greater repugnancy to marry the count de Montjoye, than any other man what oever, because she has a greater esteem for him, than for any other; that it would be tempting God, if she should run the risque of marrying a man she could not love; and, that the only way she had of shewing her gratitude, was to refuse him her *hand*, since, with it, she could not surrender her *heart*. How unhappy are they who are wedded to such opinions! I pity the poor girl:

girl: All her natural endowments are become fatal to her, since the only man, capable of making any impression on her heart, is insensible to her love; and the count's silence in his last letter, convinces us of it. My husband has just wrote to him, and inform'd him, both of the match which has been offered, and of my sister's dislike to it, he has made no scruple to say it is upon his account, and desires to know the reasons, which induced him to request, that his sister might not be suffered to enter into any engagement. She does not know the marquis has taken that step, and she is under the greatest affliction, which I can by no means mitigate. I do not leave her alone, and we walk together almost the whole day.

At our first going abroad we were frightened, almost to death, for we could not stir a step, without treading upon adders: I screamed out at the first I saw, but a country woman, who was passing by, took it up in her hand, and threw it out of the road. I trembled when I saw the woman take up that frightful animal, but use has made them familiar to me, and I am now, no more afraid of a viper, than of a fly. They never bite in this village, and I have seen them even in children's cradles; they twine themselves about their arms and necks, and are in their houses, like other domestick animals: I was curious in enquiring what should prevent these creatures from hurting the inhabitants of Aix, when, only six miles off, their bite is mortal; and those simple, honest folks told me, that one of their patrons had obtained that favour from heaven.

I do not, in any wise, doubt of the power of the Almighty, who can, at his pleasure, multiply prodigies; but I am perswaded, he is not lavish of them, and that a *physical* reason may be assigned for this pretended miracle. For example, may not the diminution of the malignity of those animals be owing to the quality of the waters in which they are found? I have observed, that when they are taken out of the warm water, in which they commonly abide,

A YOUNG LADY. 177

abide, they are quite benumbed, and recover their activity by very slow degrees: On this I ground my conjecture; but, I am not naturalist good enough, to determine with certainty.

I am, &c.



LET-



LETTER XLVI.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

INDEED, my dear child, your sister's present situation, makes me very uneasy. I flattered myself, that the count had been touched at the affection she betrayed for him, but his silence has destroyed all my hopes.

As to your sister's notions of marriage, I cannot well either commend or blame them; one ought to be mistress of a very great portion of virtue and resolution, to be able to eradicate from the heart a passion which is strongly rooted there; and it is a hard case, to be forced to owe one's affection for a husband to duty alone. If a woman, whose affections are not *pre-engaged*, should enter into an union with a man she has not the least love for, I should think her happiness *precarious*; but in my daughter's circumstances, I would never oblige any one to consent to a match, the consequences of which I should think myself responsible for. Endeavour to prevail on the marquis not to be importunate with her. Of what advantage will the greatest fortune be to her, if she must undergo conflicts, as dangerous to her virtue, as fatal to her repose.

I am of your opinion in respect of miracles. Were they multiplied unseasonably, they would become contemptible. We are told that the isle of Malta has the same privilege as the village of Aix, in Savoy; all venomous creatures, they say, have been harmless ever since St. Paul was bit there by a viper, without receiving any hurt; this prodigy would have a better foundation than the other, were we assured of the fact. However, I leave it undetermined, as you have done.

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done. Men take a pleasure in finding out something marvellous in natural events, which are beyond their reach, and do not bestow a thought on the many prodigies, which are continually operated before their eyes. Our preservation, for example, is a miracle which few people are struck with ; and, if we would only reflect on the numberless machines that go to our composition, on their great use, and on their fragility, we should cry out, it is miraculous. We are quite surrounded by prodigies ; the sea, that breaks its tumid waves against a grain of sand, and does not pass the bounds which God has set it, is miraculous. In short, I should never make an end, were I to enumerate the numberless miracles which daily appear before our eyes, and which we suffer to pass without the least regard.

I think, a miracle is wanting, to produce a change in your sister's sentiments. Earnestly beg of that God, whom the winds and seas obey, and who only can appease the tempests, which the passions raise in our minds, that he will deign to grant her that favour. Engage her to address herself to that father of mercies ; he never refuses such as apply to him with a sincere and humble heart. Adieu.



LETTER XLVII.

The MARCHIONESS DE ——, to MADAME DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

ALAS! I have scarce strength to write to you, in the midst of the adversities which surround me. My heart is broken, and the Lord has wounded it, in the tenderest part. I have no son! dear mother, for the youngest died last night, and the eldest is in so great danger, that the physicians have given him over. My sister, who would assist me in taking care of my children, has been ill these two hours, and her physician is of opinion, that she has taken the small-pox; for that is the cruel distemper which is depriving me of my dear infants. My husband, who has never had it, and who is greatly afraid of it, was, I may say, forced away from his house, by one of his friends. How shall I do to let him know our loss? What can I do to support it myself? Oh! my God, why did I not precede my dear children to the grave? "Oh, Lord! who hast visited me with a heavy visitation, give me strength to endure this tearing of me from myself. My soul forsakes me, she follows after my dear babes, and looks with horror on the necessity of abiding in this world, which, now, has nothing to bestow on me. Forgive my complaints, my God, my heart is ready and obedient to thy will, but nature is weak. Restore to me my dying son, sovereign Disposer of life and death: Shorten my days, and add them to his, or rather, thy blessed will, not mine, be done! I revere the hand that strikes me, I adore the wisdom of thy dispensations. This beloved child, is not mine. May he—

I have

I have been obliged to give over writing, which I was doing by the dear boy's bedside, who was between life and death. The small-pox had struck in, immediately after its first appearance, and the child lay senseless, scarce shewing any signs of life. My maid brought me a poor country woman, who had just recovered four of her children from the same distemper. The woman said she was afraid she came too late for the boy; but that she would be answerable for my sister, provided the physicians did not come near her. However, she immediately caused the child to swallow a large cup of wine mixed with treacle, as she said the poor little innocent suffered greatly for want of something to nourish it, and that it had not strength enough to expel the venom. I trembled when I saw him swallow the potion; however, he is come to his senses, and the pock is coming out again. My letter, the beginning whereof was obliterated by the most bitter tears, is now watered by those of joy. I have done a hundred fantastick things, and threw myself at the woman's feet, to thank, and conjure her to save my child. Poor creatures! Where is our strength, when God lays his hand upon us?

My son has had a copious sweat, and all my people, who, as well as I, think him out of danger, cannot contain their joy. And that joy is augmented every moment, by a fresh increase of favourable symptoms. My deliverer has obliged me to leave him, saying, she will be answerable for his life, and that he must be left, intirely, to her management. Intelligence is continually brought me concerning him; and, I hear, the woman has just order'd an old cock to be killed to add to the patient's broth. Will not that be a means of increasing the fever? But, we must give her her way.

I intended to have this letter sent away immediately, but will defer it 'till to-morrow, as I have great hope, by that time, I shall be able to give you still a more favourable account.

I cannot conceive, considering the violent agitation I was in, how I could take any rest. But nature, with affliction and watching, was quite weighed down. I have slept seven hours, but for the four preceding days, I never closed my eyes. My mind, full of my poor children, I have talked of nothing else; and doubtless, to the situation I was in before I went to sleep, I owe the following dream.

Methought I was in the midst of a mountain, a thousand times more frightful than mount Cenis. All over, and round about it, were precipices innumerable, and it was filled with hideous monsters. Clouds, whence lightning never ceased to flash, totally covered the mountain, and every moment the thunder roared: There were a great number of people who flocked in crowds, upon the mountain, otherwise it would have been soon a desert, for at each instant, I saw perish, all around me, people of every age, and of both sexes. Some were devoured by the wild beasts, others fell into the precipices, some were struck by the lightning, and others, but a very small number, had the good fortune to get over the precipices, and to reach a delicious plain, which was at the foot of the mountain. There they quenched their thirst with full draughts from the chrystral streams, and with uplifted hands returned their thanks for the dangers they had escaped. I made my utmost efforts to arrive at that plain, and to carry with me my two sons, whom I lead by the hand; when a man of a stern countenance, told me, with a loud voice, *Thy time of rest is not yet come, and thou hast many years to wander on this mountain:* At the same time, he snatched from me my two children, and with a mighty arm, hurled the youngest in the midst of the plain; he was ready to do the same with the other, when I rushed upon him, and wept so bitterly, that he restored him to me again. “ Cuel mother,” said the dear child to me, what have I done to thee, that thus thou shouldest deprive me of felicity? Consider the dangers thou exposest me to,

“ and

“ and cast thy eyes upon my brother.” At the same time I saw my youngest son, bathing in a stream of the most limpid water. Peace, and the purest joy, shone forth in his countenance, but, notwithstanding the satisfaction I felt at this happy condition, I could not help lamenting my being separated from him.

In this violent agitation I awaked, and my favourite woman, who was by my bedside, told me my son was out of danger; that the marquis had eluded the vigilance of his friend, and, without consideration of the risque he run, was come to see his child. I immediately got up, and went to him, and we mingled our tears and embraces; but our joy at the great probability of that child’s happy recovery (which was now become our only one) lessened our grief for the loss of the other.

Our doctress has assured my husband, that a father never catches the small-pox of his children: Our people say, it is only an old woman’s story; and the marquis, who, probably, is of the same opinion, seems to credit what she says, that he may not be obliged to quit his son. But how much soever his thoughts are taken up with his poor sick child, he has a lively sense of my sister’s danger and is greatly mortified that he dares not enter her chamber, which our tutelar angel has absolutely prohibited. I divide myself between my son, and my sister; and you may rest satisfied I shall take all possible care of her.

That dear patient is now asleep, and being alone by her bedside, I have reflected upon my dream. It is surely a lesson which God has been pleased to give me, to shew how blind I am to the true happiness of my children. Faith should make me shed tears of joy, to see my youngest at rest, in the bosom of God, and delivered from the miseries and dangers of this world, but my faith is very weak. “ Strengthen it, oh! my God. Dispose of *me* and

“ mine, according to thy wisdom and goodness ;
“ and do not suffer thy poor creature to murmur,
“ for the privation of those blessings, which thou
“ hast but lent her, and which thou may’st resume
“ at thy pleasure.”

Mad



LET.



LETTER XLVIII.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

HOW greatly do I pity thee, poor mother ! To know thy situation, one must have made trial of it. I assume the pen, dear child, to strengthen and confirm your courage, and, I find, I am yet weaker than you. What, then, can cause this great dejection in us both ? The hand that strikes us, is it not the hand of a merciful father ?

I cannot consider your dream as the effect of an impression, made on your senses by the objects about you : I look upon it to be, as you imagine, a useful lesson, which God has given you. Short-sighted parents ! What do you ask of the Lord, when you cry to him, to obtain the life of a child, which he, in his mercy, is taking away ? Rather thank him for his goodness, that withdraws him from the danger of perdition. Let us lift up our eyes to heaven, and view that infant in the bosom of beatitude : What fortune, what glory, could we procure for it, so valuable, as that it enjoys ? Did you not resign that child to God, the moment you received it at his hands ? And have not I resigned up my dear daughter, and my other children, every day of my life ? Did I not continually cry out, and beg of him, that he would take you out of this world, rather than you should partake of the pollution of it ? " I renew that prayer, ch ! my God. " Do not lend thine ear to the murmurings of the " flesh ; my soul disclaims them, and is perfectly obe- " dient to thy wisdom. Happy, that I have a sacri- " fice to offer thee for the blotting out those crimes, " which I have committed thro' a blind tenderness to " my children."

Great is the goodness of God, my dear child ; he deigns to accept the unwilling sacrifice we offer, of what is dearest to us. I feel, by the calm my soul enjoys, 'midst the tempest of my senses, that he accepts my offering. What glory is it for a weak creature, that he has something which he can offer to God ! What happiness, that he can imitate him, in the sacrifice he made of his only Son, for our salvation ! That thought comforts, animates, and strengthens me. " Yes, my God, with my whole heart I make thee an offering of all I hold most dear ; and, if a sigh would save my childrens lives, contrary to thy will, I would not breath it forth."

Before you receive this letter, our dear children will be either dead, or past all danger. I hope if your sister's malady is like to be fatal, you will not conceal her condition from her. Furnish her with every spiritual assistance you can procure, and defer it not, as is too common, 'till the last moment, for you cannot be too early, in exhorting her to prepare herself for death.

Over and above my concern for the sick, I am very uneasy at the great fatigue you undergo, and the risque the marquis runs in being amongt you. Small is the capacity of our hearts to bear many griefs, and, we poor creatures, should certainly sink under them, if God did not support us in an extraordinary manner.

I hope you will lessen my trouble, by sending me an express, with an account of the condition of the poor sick children. 'Till that moment, I shall say, without ceasing, " Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me : Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done."



LETTER XLIX.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame du
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

WHEN I wrote my last letter to you, I thought I had suffered all a poor wretch could possibly undergo, without dying; and yet my grief was nothing, in comparison to what I have felt for these three days. My poor sister has been at the very brink of the grave, and the hardest heart must have melted, at the sight of the terrible condition she was in, during four and twenty hours. The small-pox went on as well as we could wish 'till the seventh day, she was as full as she could hold, from head to foot, and had been blind two days. Towards the close of the seventh day, she was seized with fainting and convulsive fits, and continued in them during the whole night. About five o'clock in the morning, our good country woman bid me not be frightened; that some purples appeared, it was true, but, she hoped, she should get the better of them.

She caused about thirty snails to be crushed, which were spread on some flax, and applied to the soles of the patient's feet, and gave her, at the same time, some wine mixed with treacle. Notwithstanding the great confidence I had in the woman, I was about to inform my sister of her danger; but she prevented me; the prospect of eternity, which my sister thought she was just entering on, made a very deep impression on her. The poor girl, though she has always led a very innocent life, thought herself so guilty in the sight of God, that it was with the greatest difficulty, I could keep her hope alive. The unprofitableness of her life, above all, was a burden she could scarce support. What answer, said she shall I make to God,

God, when he shall accuse me, that, tho' he sent me into the world, to serve him, I have been taken up, only, with myself? Dare I plead to him, duties of religion, performed only by habit, and that with great lukewarmness and inattention? Alas, dear sister, continued she, the sight of approaching death rectifies our ideas. How poor and trifling does that world, which I so earnestly sighed after, now appear to me! In how different a light do I now see my passion for the count, which I once thought a most innocent one! A creature possessed my whole heart, and was my idol. I would have made a sacrifice to him of my youth, and of my liberty; and the love of God, far from being any true motive to the sacrifice, was only a pretext to it: Great, therefore is my horror and confusion for my mis-spent life. In this condition, my dear mother, she was, during two whole days; and I have not left her a moment.

A physician, whom we called in, unknown to the country woman, has been with her, but would not risque the giving her any medicine. Every twelve hours, the snails have been changed, which was done with the greatest precaution, the servant who took them away, having her mouth and nose so closely covered with a handkerchief dipped in sharp vinegar, and took some treacle; and yet she was like to faint, the smell was so very offensive. The woman has assured us, that this application prevents the malignity from getting into the head, where it might form an abcess, and the physician is of the same opinion.

At last, God has granted us the life of my dear sister: She is judged to be out of danger, but we are afraid she will be quite disfigured; one of her eyes, especially, is greatly damaged; she is not frightened at it, but has made an offering of her beauty to God, with a courage, that equally surprizes and edifies us.

My son is out of bed again, and they tell me, he will not be pitted, for I have not seen him since the purples appeared on my sister, and he is at a friend's house with his father. I was very much persuaded to leave my sister, but I thought it so barbarous, that

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A YOUNG LADY. 189

I would not consent to it. God has given a blessing to my courage, and notwithstanding my great fatigue, I am in very good health. I hope my next will bring you news of my sister's entire recovery, as I depend much on the satisfaction that appears in the countenance of our doctress.

P. S. Within these two days, since I began my letter, my sister is surprizingly recovered.



LET-

LETTER L.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

I Admire your courage, my dear child. Mine was quite sunk at the reading your letter, and tho' it concluded with such favourable news, I shall not be quite easy, 'till I hear from you again. I admire the goodness of God, to my poor sick child ; the danger she has been in, has given her a clear view of the great truths of salvation, which often make but a faint impression on persons of her age. They are apt to think, they discharge their duty towards God in the most ample manner, if they avoid heinous crimes ; if in a superficial manner they perform the duties of his religion ; and if, with a mind fixed on this world, they repeat a few prayers, though without any attention, respect, or devotion. But at the approach of death (as my dear girl observed) things appear in their true light. Happy are they, who, through their whole lives, have a due sense of their salutary light ! The soul is, as it were, annihilated, and crushed by it, as to *this world* : But how greatly is it thereby strengthened for the life to come ? My child will never forget those truths, which the presence of death has now discovered to her : It is a sure antidote against all the perils of this life. And I think I do not judge amiss, my dear, in attributing our errors, to the great pains we take to avoid the thought of death ; we impose upon ourselves as to our last hour. In our youth we consider it as at so great a distance, that we have time enough to think of it ; being arrived at years of maturity, we trust to our health, and the long lives of many persons we have known ; and, spight of old age and sickness, death always comes unlook'd for. It was for this cause, I prevailed upon you to employ

employ a quarter of an hour each morning, in asking yourself, in what manner you should pass the day, and, whether, it might not be the last you had to live?

A lady of my acquaintance, whom I assured the other day, that I believed you had never omitted asking those questions, answered, she could not conceive how you could preserve your chearfulness, or have the least enjoyment in life, with such thoughts, which she said, would turn her brain. What an error is this? Is death then, in itself, so terrible? What traveller is there, who, after a tedious wearisome voyage, does not long to revisit his native country? What is the spell, that fixes our affections on this life? We are wretched prisoners, ready to sink under the burden of our chains, and yet we hug them. But if death itself is so terrible, it is not so with the consequences of it: To be sure, said the lady, just mentioned, they must inspire us with a salutary fear; but pray, who ought to be afraid of the consequences of death? They, said I, who live as if they thought they should never die. A child, who is beloved by his father, and who always uses his best endeavours to obey his commands, does not shun his father's sight. He is not terrified at those faults he commits thro' frailty, because he knows the goodness of that tender parent. And what can more powerfully incline us to obey the will of our *heavenly* father, than a daily consideration, that perchance, before night, we may be called to give an account of our actions!

I admire, as well as you, your sister's resignation to Providence, in regard to the loss of her beauty. It is the idol of the world; and to bear the loss, without repining, requires either a thorough sense of religion, or an uncommon sublimity of mind: And I hope she will continue in those sentiments.

I have heard before, of your good woman's remedy; it has been successfully used in all malignant fevers: And I am persuaded, nothing more is necessary in treating that disorder, than to prevent the venom

venom from reaching the heart, by the use of treacle, and to give the sick something, to strengthen and enable them to expel the virulence. Unlettered persons, often know as much, as the most learned, on these occasions. I remember a fact, that happend at the time of my last journey to Paris, which is inserted in the transactions of the academy, and which, in a great measure, proves my assertion. A gardener's wife was seized with the small-pox, the day after her lying-in; and consequently, they were forced to leave her to nature. It came out very kindly, and she was very full: She found means to escape from her nurse, ran to the bottom of the garden, and threw herself into a well. (You know, that even in summer, the water in a well is very cold.) She was in it up to the neck, and was looked upon as a dead woman. However, endeavours were made to get her out, and her husband was going down into the well for that purpose, when just in the mid-way, his ladder broke, and by the fall, he broke a leg and an arm. A considerable time passed, before they could procure another ladder, and in that interval, a nun, one of that order called Grey Sisters, who take care of the indigent sick, passed by the place: Seeing a great crowd of people, she asked the occasion of it, and being told, she ran to the woman's house, and sent for a large quantity of brandy, with which she well soaked two sheets. By this time the gardener's wife was brought ~~home~~, without any outward appearance of the malady upon her, (the cold water having struck it all in) and senseless. The nun caused her immediately to be wrapped up in the sheets she had prepared; and the physicians, who were called in, were of opinion she had taken the only method that could have saved the woman's life. At the end of about an hour, the patient came to her sences, crying out she was all on fire; about half an hour afterwards, the small-pox came out again, and in three hours after that, the woman was in the same situation as she was before she got out of bed. She is now living, and told this fact herself, to my surgeon.

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I was induced to mention this incident to you, in order to shew, that in respect to certain diseases, nothing more is wanting than long experience, and to leave nature to her own operations.

I shall never forget, my dear, the hazard you have put your own life to, in the care you have taken of your sister's, and I hope she will be grateful for it. Embrace your doctress for me, and do the like to your son, and the marquis, when you shall be at liberty to see them.



VOL. II.

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LETTER LI.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to MADAME DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

HEAVEN has caused the purest joy to succeed the killing grief, which so lately oppressed us. My sister is recovered of her distemper, and out of all danger; she is come off with the loss of her beauty, of which, not the least vestige remains. She was removed yesterday to another house, where we all met; and in the midst of the mirth and happiness, occasioned by our re-union, a servant came and to my husband a gentleman, below, desired to see him. I think I have already informed you, that the marquis wrote the count word, an advantageous match offered for my sister, and tho' she had refused to accept it, he was resolved to make use of his authority, if the count would forego the promise he had enjoined him, not to dispose of her in marriage before the end of the year.

On receipt of this letter, the count, having obtained leave of absence for three months, set out post, and is just now arrived. He embraced my husband, and asked him, if to the title of friend, which had so long united them, he would permit him to join that of brother, by giving him my sister in marriage? Those words, which at another time would have transported my husband with joy, now drew sighs from him. The count in the greatest flight, pressed him to tell the cause, and my husband answered, you must expect to see my sister no more. What is she dead? Is she married? said the count, (under the greatest confusion) neither the one, nor the other, answered the marquis, but the small-pox has been such a cruel enemy to her, that I do not believe you

will

will know her again. You restore me to life, said the count ; that cruel distemper has no power over the mind, and I was charmed more with your sister's understanding, and good qualities, than I was with the beauties of her person. Do not delay a moment then, but bring me to her, I beseech you.

They deliberated a short time, whether the count's too sudden appearance might not be too great a shock for the dear girl to support, more especially, as she has not yet quite recovered her strength ; however, at last, they thought it more adviseable the should be acquainted with the whole matter at once, than by degrees.

The marquis entered first, and the count was at my sister's feet, before she perceived him. In her first surprize, she hid her face with her hands : But, the count told her, his love would have enabled him to find her out, spight of the alteration of her features ; that he was come to make her an offer of a heart, which had been hers, ever since he discovered her sentiments for him. I am happy, added he, that the loss of your beauty, has given me an opportunity to convince you of the nature, and reality, of the love you have inspired me with, and that it is now in my power, to make some return for the great offers you have slighted on my account.

During all this time, my sister and I stood silent. But no sooner had I recovered myself a little, than I ran to the count, and embraced him. What a happiness was it to me, that I should no longer have reason to dissemble my esteem for him ! What joy, to the marquis, that he could strengthen the bands, which had so long united him with that worthy friend ! His generous offer of his heart to my sister, (now so greatly changed from what she was) must certainly augment her love for him ; and I cannot conceive a felicity equal to theirs.

I left him at my sister's feet, and, at his request, have wrote you this letter, which he will send by an express. He conjures you not to defer his happiness, and,

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and, as I know your sentiments in this respect, I doubt not but you will comply with his desires.

Alas ! dear mother, what a strange thing is the human heart ! For these fifteen days mine has been sunk in affliction, and could I possibly foresee, it would now want room to contain my joy.



LET-

LETTER LII.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

God is of great goodness, dear child, he moderates the affliction of this life, by unexpected blessings: I am just in the same situation with you; I sincerely partake of your sister's good fortune; and, our felicity is so great, that it seems to be but a dream. My husband, who is highly sensible of the honour the count does him, will himself be the messenger of his consent. I wish I could have accompanied him, but our affairs oblige me to remain here some time, and I cannot set out 'till towards the end of the month; but I desire my absence may occasion no delay. For, tho' it would be the greatest satisfaction to me, to be a witness to the union of two persons I hold so dear, I will not retard their happiness a moment. How heavily will the time pass, my dear, 'till I can embrace you; my impatience to be acquainted with my two sons-in-law, is equally great, and, after having seen the felicity of my family, I shall willingly say in the words of the Saint, *Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace.*

I admire the dispensations of Providence towards us, and by what means it has guided us to this happiness. Losses, which seemed irreparable, had sunk our family to the greatest ebb; and God has raised it by methods, which, no human eye could foresee. But, my dear child, the hand that is able to build up, can also destroy: Let us, therefore, intirely resign ourselves to his will and pleasure. Let us not forget the dust from whence he raised us, but be ready to return to it, without repining, if what he hath ordained for us, should make it necessary. He is my witness, that I am no otherwife pleased at the good fortune of my

dear children, than as it appears to be the reward of their virtue.

The count, and your husband, have probably concealed from you, their great liberality to us ; they have furnished us, in a most generous manner with a sum of money, to bear the expences of our journey, which, I presume, they have not mentioned to you : And they have also, made a present to each of your brothers, of a purse, to purchase a company : Pray assure them of my gratitude, 'till I can be able, in person, to make due acknowledgements, for their great favours.





LETTER LIII. (a)

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame du MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

HOW well prepared soever I was, for our separation, yet I could not help being greatly afflicted at your departure. What is the happiness of this life? Can we flatter ourselves that it will be permanent, when it depends on every thing round about us? How dangerous it is, to give a loose, even to the most innocent delights! The happiness I have enjoyed during your short stay here, will imbitter all the moments of my life. I shall seek for you, I shall wish for you, every where; I shall find you,—no where. Let your letters at least, afford me some consolation, and write to me more frequently, dear mother, for I never stood in so great need of your advice.

You were scarce two hours gone on your journey, when my husband received a letter from his lawyer, desiring him to come, with all speed, to Grenoble, on account of a cause, which the marquis had then depending in the (b) parliament of that place, and which was ready to come on to trial. Though the cause was of great consequence to the marquis, he told

(a) Between the last letter from the marchioness to madame du Montier, and the following, I find, by the dates, an interval of fourteen months, which time, it is prob'le, madame du Montier passed with her daughter; and, as in the following letters, the marchioness's sister is stiled countess, we may suppose her marriage was celebrated, during that period. It will also appear, by the sequel, that the marquis had been absent six months, and, that the king of Sardinia had commanded his presence at Turin.

(b) The parliaments of France are tribunals of justice, and causes are tried before them, as in our courts of law.

told me, he could not think of leaving me, in that melancholy disposition, and that he would not go, if I was not in a condition to accompany him. I had a great dislike to the journey: For I must have received visits in that city, and given into the diversions there; which would have been very irksome to me, who then longed for solitude.

There is a certain kind of grief, which seems to be in some measure lessened, by giving a free course to it. I therefore desired my husband would not insist on my going, and pressed it so much as to make him angry, in which humour he left me. I think I had a sort of foresight, of what would be the consequence of it, for I was greatly vexed, at my want of concord, and, yet, I could not possibly alter my resolution. As I wanted to be alone, I told my servants, I would see no company, and that I would take a little rest: My design was to avoid being troubled with the condolence of my women, for I wanted to give a free course to my tears, which, I think, greatly lightens the load of one's heart, when under great afflictions: I stayed about a quarter of an hour in my chamber; and continuing in my uneasiness, I went down a private stair-case into the park, and came insensibly to the green arbor, which borders the canal. Being seated on the grass, I fell into a profound reverie; from whence I was soon disturbed, by deep-fetched sighs and groans, the sound of which, seemed to come from the adjoining arbor, which I approached in great terror, and stood almost motionless, at the sight of a person, in whose countenance the liveliest despair was painted. How beautiful she was, even in that condition! Sometimes she lifted up to heaven her eyes, bathed in tears, then seemed to accuse it for her great misfortunes, and, then, to implore its succour; I was about to accost her, when she sprung up suddenly, with fury in her looks. It is resolved, said she, a speedy death must terminate my woes—I go—but, soft a moment, —my soul—what will become of thee?—my guiltless babe, too! —I did not give her time to put her resolves in execution,

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cution, but with my greatest speed, running round the arbor, I came to the door of it, the very moment (as she owned to me afterwards) she was going out to throw herself into the water. At sight of me, she cried out, I took her by the hand, intreated her to calm her despair, and give me an opportunity of serving her: She trembled in a most surprizing manner; was seized with convulsive motions, and, in less than two minutes, fell senseless on the ground. The sharpest pains soon brought her to herself, she opened her eyes, and feebly pressing my hand, madam, I die, said she, but should rest content, could I but flatter myself, that you would hide my shame, and be assistant to the luckless babe, whose birth approaching, soon will end me wretched life.

Judge of the distress I was in, at this instant: I exhorted that unhappy young woman, to take courage: I promised her inviolable secrecy, and that I would take care of her child. It came into the world, almost, that moment, and I wrapped it up in one of my under petticoats: I then conjured the mother to come with me to the (a) castle, and exhorted her to beg forgiveness of God, for the resolution she had taken to destroy her own life: I am thoroughly sensible of the great heinousness of my design, said she; this little creature, now, requires me to live, but, madam, if you would not see me relapse into despair, leave me the mistress of my destiny: I find I have strength enough to go away, I have not far to go, and I should be undone, should I not appear this night; I did not think I was so near my time, and fearing it was impossible to rid me of this burden, without my parents knowledge, I did resolve to end a painful life.

Providence, surely, permitted your park gate to be open; I went in, but knew not where I went: Permit me, then, to retire immediately, you soon shall hear from me, and one day, perchance, you'll bless the happy hour, when you assisted her, who is unfortunate,

(a) The country houses of men of quality in France, are commonly called castles.

tunate, but not the wretch she seems to be. Saying these words, she drew from her finger a diamond ring ; deign to accept this, madam, said she, if death should take me off, it may be a means of making known my poor innocent child : Do not deliver it up, I beseech you, save only to the person, who shall produce to you a ring the exact counterpart of this I have given you.

I represented to the young creature, that she was not in a condition to walk, but I could not prevail on her to stay, and as I was resolved to keep the thing secret, I desired her to be easy with regard to her child, which was a sweet little girl : As it is a considerable distance from hence to the castle, for fear lest any accident should happen by the way, I baptized (a) it, in the mother's presence, who desired me to name it Virginia. That afflicted parent, kissed her child, and bathed its face with her tears. Alas ! how I pitied her : Before she departed, she said, I am perfectly easy on my poor babe's account, for I know you, madam, and am sensible she cannot be in better hands. She is not sprung from ignoble blood, and perhaps, the time may not be far off, when you will be pleased with your generosity to her. Saying these words she departed, leaving me under the greatest uneasiness, for I am afraid she will die by the way.

I returned to the castle about the close of the day, and ascending by the same stair-case to my chamber ; I laid the child down upon my bed, with intent to call my favourite, and send her to get a nurse for it ; I leave you to judge, how great was my fright, when I saw my chamber-door had been broke open, and heard my women uttering the loudest lamentations. I ran in great haste to the adjoining chamber, to learn the cause of it. At sight of me, they all eagerly arose from their seats ; one kissed my hand, another embraced me, and a third ran all over the house, crying out,

(a) In France, the mid-wife, or any other person, is permitted to administer baptism to a child, supposed to be in danger of dying immediately after its birth.

out, that their lady was found. I was soon sensible that my absence had occasioned this great consternation; which happen'd in the following manner. The marquis, as I mentioned to you before, seemed angry when he left me: As he knew my great sensibility, he was afraid, I should take to heart the little displeasure he had shewn me; and had resolv'd to return back again, had not his valet, who knows how highly it concerns his master to be at Grenoble, with all possible expedition, engaged him to write to me from a place about nine miles distant, and undertaken to deliver the letter to me. As they told him I was asleep, he waited an hour for my stirring; at the end of which, they came to my chamber-door, and called me several times, but receiving no answer, they were (as you may imagine) terrified to the last degree. They ran and called a lock-smith, and having broke open my door, and finding me not there, they searched the whole house for me; they enquired for me afterwards at every house in the village, and the moment I appeared, they had just lighted some flambeaux, in order to seek for me in the park.

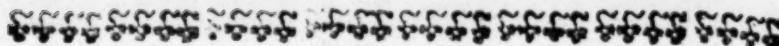
How greatly I am moved at the affection these people have shewn for me! Afraid some accident had happened to me, their joy to see me again, bordered almost upon madness: I could hardly find a moment, to bid my favourite have an eye to my charge: I wrote an answer to the marquis's letter, and, as I was afraid he would be desirous to know why I came home so late, I enjoined all the servants, and particularly my husband's valet, to be silent, whom I ordered to proceed to his master immediately.

The same night my favourite placed the child to be nurs'd with a woman of the village, who, being well paid, asked no questions from whence it came.

I do not mention my sister, you will receive a letter from the count, before this comes to hand; for he tells me, he has wrote to you from Turin, where they are both safely arrived.

I am, &c.

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LETTER LIV.

Madame du MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

WHAT great difficulties must you have been under, my dear child? And how well satisfied must you be with your walk? I trembled at that part of your letter, in which you describe the despair of that unhappy girl, who is, doubtless, a victim to an indiscreet passion. If every one of our sex, could be witnesses to such a scene, how cautious would they be to keep a strict watch over their affections? It rarely happens that a man's love survives his esteem, and it is still more rare, for that esteem to last, after a woman has rendered herself unworthy of it, by parting with her innocence. How great then, must be the despair of that unfortunate creature, who sees herself forsaken by him, she holds, most dear, and on the very point of being brought to shame. The men have made the laws, my dear, and though they are more culpable in the sight of God, than those they have drawn away, they think they have no need to blush for it, in the sight of one another. But let us not complain of that injustice; where it is well studied, it is a never-failing antidote against the poison of their flattery: This remedy, however, is, for the most part, ineffectual, because in the commencement of an intrigue, a woman cannot believe she shall be induced to consent to any thing criminal: She relies on her present sentiments, and does not know, 'till dear bought experience convinces her, that she, who has given away her heart, cannot answer for what may follow. I sincerely wish, that the fault of her you assisted, may be repaired by him who occasioned it, and I hope, he will make a provision for the child,

which

which you have taken under your care. I highly approve of your charity in that respect.

I could not help smiling at the consternation your women were in at your absence, and you have reason to be pleased with the joy they expressed at your return. If masters knew how agreeable, and how easy a thing it is to acquire the love of their servants, they would not be without the satisfaction of it. But, for the most part, they treat them with a harshness and cruelty, that makes humanity rebel, and afterwards complain, of their want of regard and affection for them. What would they have them do? They are rendered contemptible, even, in their own eyes, by a disdainful manner in which they are treated. And they should pretend to nicer sentiments than their masters are pleased to allow them, and to be capable of an affectionate regard, they would be laughed at, for pretending to things so much above their reach.

What a pretty bed is this, said a talkative lady, the other day, to a certain marchioness, more to be esteemed for her virtue, than her rank. It is without doubt your own, madam. No, answered the marchioness, it is my chamber-maid's. How can you, said the other, murder so great a jewel, as to let such a creature lie in it? You say true, madam, replied the marchioness, she *is* a creature, and so are *you* and *I*, and I do not see why our pride should make us think them so greatly beneath us.

Continue, my dear, to gain the affections of those under you. They are our *younger* brothers, and unfortunate; let us therefore act the part of generous *elder* brothers to them. Let us not increase their burden, they are loaded enough already. An affection has frequently been found amongst servants, which amounts, even, to heroism. Ancient history mentions more than one slave, who did not hesitate, to lay down their lives, for their masters; and their zeal has been thought worthy, of being handed down to posterity. The age we live in, is not unprovided of such examples; but we do not the same justice to them. Their situation, which ought to enhance the value of

their good actions, seems to lessen it, in the eyes of the vulgar. As you are quite alone, my dear, I have a strong inclination to be the historiographer of those subalterne heroes ; it may perhaps a little divert your trouble.

I was at Rouen in my youth, when the ~~car~~ ^{train} of galley slaves passed by, to go to Marseilles. There was amongst those unhappy wretches, a steward, who had been robbed by one of his clerks. This theft having put him out of a condition of making up his accounts, he was like to be hanged, and came off, with being condemned to the gallies, only by the assistance of friends. That miserable creature, blended with a crew of villains, could not bear up against fatigue, grief, and shame, he was seized with a fever, and carried in a cart, together with his wife ; by the side of which walked a servant maid, with a ~~child~~ ^{little} child of her master's in her arms. She would not abandon him in his misfortune, and had resolved to undertake a journey of six hundred miles on foot, begging all the way. Every body gave her abundantly, and, far from employing the money for the provision of herself, she lived on bread and water, and bought for her master and mistress, a more suitable diet. Where shall we find a more heroic action ? And, did not that poor girl deserve the veneration of all honest men ?

A very famous man, who not many years ago made a considerable figure in Europe, fell from a throne, and was shut up in a prison in London. His situation was so much the more deplorable, as he was sick, and his legs so swelled, that he could not stand. A man who had been his valet de chambre, and was then actually in the service of a German nobleman, having heard of his old master's situation, desired to be discharged from the German's service. His then master, surprized at his request, made a difficulty of granting it, and would know the reason for his leaving him. The servant then owned to him, that he was going to take care of a master in adversity, who had always used him very well, and he actually went away. He

lived

A YOUNG LADY. 207

lived full two years with the prisoner, and served him with as much affection and respect, as he before had done, when in the most splendid condition.

Friends of this age ! who will not know in their adversity, those you seemed to hold most dear, in their prosperity ! Come, learn of these people, who, without the help of education, supply from their own fund, sentiments of generosity, which you have no idea of !

It would fill a volume to exhaust this subject, but I am obliged to end my letter, which I find too long already.

I do not mention to you my grief at our separation ; you know my heart, and that's saying every thing.

Adieu.



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LETTER LV.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame du
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

WE do not *always* die of grief, for I am still existing; a sensation too grievous to be defined, tells me, I am yet amongst the number of the living; in other respects, I am sunk in a total annihilation: I have lost even the power of complaining. Read the two letters inclosed, and then judge what a situation I must be in. The first deprived me of the use of my senses. A happy condition! which hid me from the despair, to which I now give myself up, without measure. Yes, my dear mother, my misfortunes, are now, arrived to their utmost period, and I have no remedy left, but a speedy death; which I earnestly desire, and loudly pray for; why may I not hasten it some momen's? Forgive me, Lord! that thought, which grief extorted from me: I entirely submit to thy Providence, how rigorous soever its decrees may be. Yet, moderate them, I beseech thee, by depriving me of the light, which is insupportable to me.

Alas! dear mother, why may I not hope for the consolation of dying in your arms? With my latest breath, you would then hear me utter vows of an unblemished love; but, I cannot, without a miracle, live long enough to receive that comfort. Let this letter, watered with my tears, serve at least to justify me, when I am no more: I call *him* to witness, before whom I am ready to appear, and give an account of my unhappy life, that I die without having merited my husband's reproaches; I forgive the injustice

A YOUNG LADY. 209

justice he has done me; and hope, that God, the protector of innocence, will be pleased to blot out the ignominy, with which I go to my grave. My strength fails me.—Pray for the most unhappy of all women.



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LETTER LVI.

The Marquis DE---- to his Wife.

IF contempt had not taken place in my heart, of the most tender love, your blood should have washed out the stains you have brought on my name. But, you are beneath my vengeance. I leave to heaven, which you have dared to sport with, the means of punishing the most despicable of all creatures: And, I go for ever, from a place, which will continually bring to my remembrance, how weak I have been to love so unworthy an object. You will soon be informed of my death, and then you may give a loose to your shameful passions.

My duty to my unhappy child, prevents me from exposing your infamy. Why cannot I be ignorant of your perfidy, and be deceived, as I have been 'till now? But, the veil is fallen, which covered your deceit: And, 'till my last moment, which now approaches, I shall look on you, as the basest, and most perfidious of wretches.

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LETTER LVII.

The Marquis D E —— to his Wife.

I Deceived myself, madam, when I thought it was in my power to hate you ; happy it would be for me if I could. No, perfidious woman, not even your infidelity, can tear from my breast the fatal dart, with which you have wounded it. I am ashamed at the weakness which precipitates my departure, but, love pleads so strongly in your behalf, that it strives to impose upon me, even to think you are not criminal. Good heaven ! what would become of me, if I should be so mean as to yield to the shameful emotions, which bid me again fall at your feet, and be the fond fool I *have* been ! And, shall I, by my return, furnish you with means, *again* to deceive me, by exposing to you all my weakness ? No, death shall secure me from that danger. I fly to seek it, madam ; to rush into perils, where I shall surely meet it.

In these sad moments, whilst I am torn in pieces, by all that shame, that love, that cruel jealousy, I now endure, still I do flatter myself, that you will pay the tribute of a few tears to my memory. Too late you'll know the husband you have lost. But no, the happy lover to whom I am sacrificed, is now sole master of your heart, and you both wait impatiently, the moment when my death shall set you free, to join your guilty hands. That thought is killing, and imbibers my last moments ! But I have done ; too plain I've shewn my foolish fondness for you. Give to my departure and my death, such colour as you think convenient ; and if you would be grateful for my forbearance and my secrecy, perform

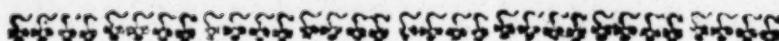
form my will in what regards my son. The only servant I shall keep about me, will soon inform you of the death of

Your much wronged

Husband.



L E T:



LETTER LVIII.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

WHY dost thou fear ? Woman of little faith ! Why, forgetful of the miracles that God has hitherto wrought in thy favour, dost thou meanly abandon thyself to despair ? How great soever the tribulations are which encompass you about, can you forget you are in the hands of the Almighty ? He makes the winds to cease, and can in a moment, calm thy troubled soul. Yes, dear child, this tempest is a trial, which God has sent you in his mercy : He finds you worthy to partake his cup. Do not then render yourself unworthy of that favour, by yielding to despair. Where is your boasted resignation to his will ? No sooner does he visit you with affliction, than you are lost to all remembrance of it.

What poor creatures we are ? How small a matter is sufficient to beat down our strength, and make our fortitude vanish ! Arm yourself with courage, my dear child, your reputation is in the hand of God : Leave *him* to dispose of it according to his pleasure. Arm yourself then with innocence, and your justification will be his care.

Your husband's first letter made me tremble ; but the second, relieved my fears. The first emotions over, he will be sensible of the injustice of his suspicions.

If I could have followed my own inclinations, I had been with you e'er now : But your father, who is very ill, must have been made acquainted with the motives for my journey, which prudence would not permit.

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The moment after I received your packet, I wrote to the count, from whom the marquis will not conceal the place of his residence, and I have conjured that dear son, that tender friend, to fly immediately to his relief. You know how great is his esteem and affection for you, and what colour soever calumny has borrowed to form the appearance of truth, it will vanish at his presence. Love pleads your cause with the marquis, and perpaps is already victorious, perhaps already has he thrown himself at your feet, and implored forgiveness.

I cannot conceive what has given rise to his jealousy. The adventure in the Park, came into my mind: But as I cannot think he has any knowledge of it, his jealousy is a mystery past my finding out. But, of what nature soever it be, as it has no foundation, I hope that God will soon put an end to it.

I send this letter by an express, who will bring me back your answer. I hope it will shew me, that my dear daughter submits herself to Providence, that she meekly kisses the hands which strikes her, and endures, without repining, whatsoever in mercy is allotted for her.

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LETTER LIX.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to MADAME DU
MONTIER, her mother.

I AM now greatly humbled, my dear mother, and, I think myself, in the highest degree, culpable, Shall a worm dare to lift up its head against the Sovereign Arbiter of heaven and earth? Was my resignation to the divine will only conditional? Had I resolved to submit to his degrees, no longer than they should be conformable to my inclinations and interest? Such reflections, my dear mother, did your letter occasion; reflections, which have inspired me with sentiments of inexpressible shame and confusion, and an unlimited obedience to all that Providence shall ordain for me. These sentiments, however, have not, in the least, diminished the grief I feel, at the marquis's absence; but, it is no longer a grief accompanied with despair. No sooner was my soul obedient, than tranquility resumed its seat. That thought, *The hand that strikes me is that of a tender father;* mixes with the bitterness which overwhelms my soul, a sweet consolation exceeding my power of description. I now consider, as well my present afflictions, as those prepared for me hereafter, as remedies calculated to destroy in my mind, a confidence in man, and that supineness, and negligence, too commonly the consequence of prosperity. Mine was so great, and seemed so firmly established, that I was in danger of forgetting my dependance on God. Adversity forces us to lift up our eyes towards the heavenly mountains, whence only can come unexpected support.

I have not received the least news where the marquis is; but, the occasion of his jealousy is no longer a mystery to me: My favourite has just received a letter

letter from my husband's valet. That faithful servant, who has been the innocent cause of all my misery, writes to the following effect.

He sets out with desiring her to conceal the letter from me, and owns to her, that, his duty to his master, would not suffer him to keep secret from him, what passed in his house during his absence ; that he had entertained violent suspicions when he saw her privately carrying out a child at such an unseasonable hour ; that in order to clear up those suspicions, he had left his horse in care of a friend, and had followed close at her heels ; that he introduced himself to the nurse's house, and, saw but too plainly, by the mysterious manner, in which that child was placed under her care, that its birth was the fruit of a criminal passion ; that my obstinacy in not accompanying my husband to Grenoble, and the difficulty they had to find me for several hours, had confirmed him in his suspicion of my guilt ; that those suspicions appearing to the marquis, as certainties, he was seized with the most violent despair. He adds, that his master's grief, prevented him from continuing a journey, of which he did not know the extent ; that a fever had stopped him in a village upon the road, and that the marquis had, at his intreaties, wrote to the count, so soon as he was a little recovered.

The poor fellow expresses great sorrow, for having undeceived the marquis, as to my conduct, tho' he still thinks me guilty ; and bitterly deplores the necessity I laid him under, either of ruining me, or betraying his master. I forgive him with all my heart, and the letter, which he was the means of his master's sending to the count, gives me great consolation.

I am under a necessity of quitting the country, and following all the world, who are running, in the greatest haste, to shut themselves up in Chambery. The approach of the Spaniards is the occasion of it. The infant Don Philip, at the head of a numerous army, is marched into Savoy, and as we have no fortified places to stop his progress, there are no thoughts

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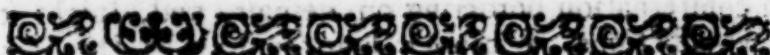
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of making any defence. The country people are in a consternation bordering on despair, and, spight of my afflictions, I cannot help smiling at the ideas they have formed of the Spaniards. This morning, the woman, who nursed the child, that has caused me so much uneasiness, came to me with tears in her eyes. For God's sake, madam, said she, take your child again, it is so plump and so white, that these wicked Spaniards will swallow it at a mouthful, for I hear they live upon human flesh, and are particularly fond of young children. I endeavoured to convince the poor creature of her error, but in vain; and she was so terrified, at the opinion she had conceived of them, that she lost her milk by it. I am therefore obliged to carry the child with me to Chambery. I must confess, I am very unwilling to do it, but that poor innocent ought not to suffer punishment for the crime it occasioned.

The count de Montjoye, who is now married, has offered me his house, which I have readily accepted. His wife is my friend, and as she is daughter to the marquis d'Arvilar, who resided many years in Spain, in quality of an ambassador, we hope Don Philip will shew some regard to that family. We shall set out in three hours, and the moment I arrive at Chambery, I will write to you.

Adieu, dear mother, I expect every moment a letter from the count.



LETTER LX.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

I Return hearty thanks to God, for the courage he has inspired you with. You are now in the direction of Providence, and happy are they who walk stedfastly therein, and make a proper use of the precious moments of adversity: It is then the soul is purified in the crucible of affliction, and weaned from the pleasures of this world: It becomes sensible, that in the days of our pilgrimage here, we are not to expect a perfect repose, which it can only enjoy, in the life that is to come, and which it earnestly longs for.

I am pleased at your sentiments with regard to the marquis's valet: That faithful servant will be covered with shame, at the misfortunes he has been the innocent cause of, and I recommend it to you, to omit no possible means of affording him consolation.

I look upon the marquis's return to be very near, as I think the count will never rest 'till he brings him back to you. And his presence will be very necessary at this juncture, when Chambery is full of enemies. Not so terrible, indeed, as your poor people imagine; but whose neighbourhood cannot fail occasioning many disorders.

The resolution you have taken of going to the count de Montjoy's house, makes me easy, and I hope you will let me hear from you every post, which I am the more desirous of, considering the present critical situation of affairs.

Adieu.

L E T.



LETTER LXI.

The MARCHIONESS DE ——, to Madame DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

WE are now as quiet at Chambery, as though we had no enemy near us, and this tranquility we owe to the prudence of the count de Montjoye. At the first report that the Spaniards were come, the whole city was in the greatest confusion. The officer that commanded here for the king of Sardinia, with the greatest expedition, carried away the king's money, beyond the mountains. Salt, tobacco, and other commodities, that paid taxes, were rated at the lowest prices, and when they had sold as much as they could, the governor and the rest of the king's officers retired, and left the city to take care of itself. The business then was, to find out a wise and knowing pilot, to steer affairs in so stormy a season, but nobody seemed willing to undertake so difficult a task. Bread was soon so scarce, that it could hardly be procured at the most extravagant prices: The streets were crowded with carts loaded with household furniture, and other moveables; every one was hastening to get into France, and the nobility, who could not abandon their estates, remained alone in the city; when, the count de Montjoye (who is not five and twenty years old) undertook to restore things to order. Through his care, abundance, and security, succeeded want and terror. He went to Montmeillant to wait upon Don Philip, and, made an agreement with his ministers as to what was required to be furnished by the city. By his care, a great quantity of corn was collected, which was to be delivered to the troops: He passed the nights in council, and the days in procuring the corn, and other provisions, necessary

cessary for the subsistence of a great army. He rendered himself very acceptable to that prince ; and the count's wife, having been introduced to his highness, was treated with the greatest politeness. I was very much pressed to make one of the party ; but in my present melancholy situation, I had so little inclination to the trouble of dressing myself proper for the occasion, that I declined it.

I have this instant received a letter from my brother-in-law, the count ; at the sight of which, I was so terrified, that I wept over it, more than half an hour, without daring to open it, fearing it might add to that affliction, which already was become almost insupportable. But, I am agreeably surprized ! The count has not deceived our expectation ; his friendship made him fly to my husband's relief, and he has offered to be responsible for my innocence, though appearances were against me. He tells me, he would have brought the marquis home, but the present posture of affairs obliged them to attend their king to fight against his enemies ; that my husband is so much ashamed at the suspicion he had entertained, that he could not presume to write to me.

I was, as you may imagine, overjoyed at the reading this letter, and full of that joy, communicated part of it to the marquis de Montjoye, and amongst the rest, informed him of my husband's departure for Turin. His answer was, that by this step of the marquis's, we shall be greatly embarrassed, since all our estates, in Savoy, will be in danger of being confiscated. He advised me to go with him to Mountmeillaut, and he will get Mr. de Saint Croix to introduce me to the infant, and by that means I shall avoid a great deal of trouble and uneasiness. I will not finish my letter 'till I return, that I may be able to give you an account of my success in this negotiation.

Wonderful are the ways of Providence, and the means it makes use of to raise us up from the abyss, in which we think ourselves sunk for ever ! As the count de Montjoye was going to set out, he was informed, that a young French gentleman, whose name

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is Sabran, and who had been his fellow traveller, was come to visit him.

The first compliments over, the count asked him, to what lucky chance, he was indebted for the pleasure of seeing him. Mr. de Sabran was about to answer him, when I entered the room. Scarce was I seated, but, that young gentleman, approaching me, earnestly desired leave to look at one of my rings. I gave it him, and as it was the same which the incog-nita had presented to me, to be serviceable in the owning of the child, (the cause of all my misfor-tunes) I steadfastly viewed the young gentleman, to discover if he was not the hero of our tragedy. The great surprize he was under plainly shewed it. After having examined the inside of the ring, a sudden joy appeared in his countenance, and he asked me, if he might without offence, desire me to inform him, by what means I became possessed of it. I was in the greatest confusion imaginable, for I did not care to disclose the adventure, before the count, and for the world I would not have told him a lie. As I made him no answer, but with my blushes, he fell at my feet, and conjured me, in the most pressing manner, to put an end to the cruel uneasiness, which the sight of that ring had caused in him. It is the only pledge of my faith, said he, which I gave to a beloved wife, of whom I have not been able to get the least intelligence.

Whilst Mr. de Sabran was speaking, I recovered myself in some measure, from the confusion I had been in, and being now restrained only by the count's presence, Mr. de Sabran, who perceived it, told me, he made no secret of any of his affairs to the count de Montjoye, and that at this juncture, he greatly wanted his advice.

I then gave them an exact account of the adventure in the park, but I could not tell him where he might find the lady he sought after, since I did not know myself where she was. However, we all concluded she could not be far from our castle; and, Mr.

de Sabran, being desirous of enabling the count to assist him, gave him the following account.

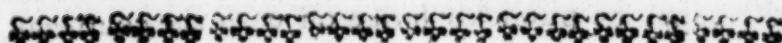
That having had the good fortune to gain the affections of mademoiselle de Sillery, who was a rich heiress, she had consented to make him happy, by a private marriage ; that three months after the marriage, he had been obliged to leave her, by reason the lady's family had a suspicion of their correspondence. That he had wrote to her several times without receiving any answer ; and that the grief he suffered, on account of her silence, had brought him to the point of death ; that, since his recovery, he had made a fruitless search after her, she having left Paris, as well as the rest of the family ; but it was supposed she was somewhere in the neighbourhood of Lyons.

When Mr. de Sabran had finished his story, the count de Montjoye got up and embraced him. The lady's father, said he, is my intimate acquaintance, and is now with my family at Chambery, and assure yourself of every assistance that lies in my power to serve you.

The confirmation of this marriage, I am afraid, will not be easily obtained. Mr. de Sillery, I understand, is a very obstinate old man, and is reputed to be a great lover of money ; Mr. de Sabran is a younger brother, who has, (according to the common phrase) no other fortune but his cloak and his sword : However, his friend keeps up his spirits, and gives him hopes the event will be happy. Till that lucky moment, he has desired him to make use of his house, whither I have ordered the little girl to be brought, which Mr. de Sabran longs impatiently to embrace.

I am, &c.

L E T.



LETTER LXII.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

I Thank God, my dear child, for the means of justification he has afforded you. He can, at his pleasure, bring truth to the light, tho' it were buried deep as the center. I have seen an example of it, lately, which ought to encourage all those whose honour has been unjustly taken from them.

About two years ago, there came to a courtesan, remarkable for her beauty, and for ruining the fortunes of all those who were so unhappy as to take a fancy to her. As she led a scandalous life, the rector of the parish sent her private notice, that if she did not alter her conduct, or quit the town, he should be obliged to have recourse to the power of the magistrate to compel her to it. When this message was brought to the woman, she was in company with one of the principal inhabitants of the place, and being furiously bent on revenge, she employed the whole power of her charms to induce him to assist her in her vengeance. The man, who had a great love for her, fearing he should lose his mistress, if he disobeyed, gave into her design. He was one of those, who are possessed of the dangerous talent of counterfeiting hand-writing, and having the means to get one of the priest's letters, in his custody, he so artfully imitated the hand, that, it was impossible, not to be deceived by it. He afterwards wrote a letter to the woman, as from the pastor, in which he asked pardon, of the courtesan, for the public steps, which he was obliged, on account of his character, to take against her; and concluded, with a promise, to be punctual to the rendezvous she had given him for the next night.

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When the impostor had furnished himself with this false copy, he publickly broke off with the courtezan, who, openly complained, that a letter of the greatest consequence had been taken away from her. The impostor's friends, asking him what letter it was she made so much noise about, he privately shewed it them, and said, it was not proper so shameful an epistle should be left in the hands of a woman of her character. Thus, the wretch pretended to be tender of the reputation of a man, he had resolved to destroy! And, he divulged this pretended secret to so many persons, that, at last, it came to the ears of the bishop, who refused to give any credit to it, as the rector had been always esteemed a man of the most unblemished character.

The bishop, however, desired to see the letter, and, having compared it with some others of the rector, he no longer doubted of his guilt. He sent for the supposed criminal, and, put into his hand the counterfeit letter. The priest perused it, without the least disorder, and, returning it back, said, it is a very exact copy, but God knows I did not write it.

The offence, however, was too publickly known to be over-looked; the rector was suspended, and obliged to retire to a seminary, where he remained a prisoner two years, and was not released 'till this morning. The bishop himself, having granted him his freedom, and ordered the proofs of his innocence to be fixed up in all public places.

The manner of its being brought to light, was thus. Yesterday a gentleman of the town made a ball, to which your father and brother were invited; the author of the letter was there, little suspecting, that God had chosen, for the punishment of his crime, the very moment he had appointed for his diversion. In the middle of the night, he was seized with a violent fit of the cholick, and as it was feared it would be mortal, they could not remove him from the house where the ball was, and the master of it furnished him with a bed.

Physicians, and a Confessor were sent for ; but, before they could come, the wretch confessed, to every one present, that he was persuaded, God had punished him for the great injustice he had done to the rector. He survived his confession some hours, and confirmed the pastor's innocence, by a declaration, made before a public notary, to render it more authentic : Your father, who signed it as a witness, as well as your brother, have just now told me the particulars of this fact ; which serves to raise in me fresh proofs of the wisdom of Providence, that sooner or later, is sure to be the avenger of guilt, and the guardian of innocence.

I admire, as well as you, the prudent conduct of the young count de Montjoye. Be ruled by his advice, that you may avoid the confiscation of your estate.

Write to me often, and, especially, when you shall hear from the marquis. Good God ! how I love the dear count, for having undertaken to be responsible for your conduct ! How delighted will he be, when he knows the happy catastrophe of this *unhappy* affair ?

Adieu, my dearest daughter.

Adieu.





LETTER LXIII.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame du MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

I have, at last, received a letter from the marquis, in answer to one I wrote to him, in which I gave him a particular account of the unlucky adventure, that occasioned his suspicions. He expresses great sorrow for the injustice he has done me, and promises he will omit nothing, in his power, to make me forget it. The count de Montjoye gave me a caution, not to say a word to him of my visit to the infant Don Philip, as it might be dangerous to his quiet, and I have followed his advice.

We went yesterday to Montmeillant, and the marquis de St. Croix introduced me to the prince. I advanced to kiss his hand, which he courteously prevented, and saluted me. Having been told I was a French woman, he asked me several questions relating to the customs of my country, not that he is a stranger to them, but he loves to discourse of them. Tho' this prince is tall, his shape is a little defective, but, in other respects, you shall seldom see a more agreeable man: His easy air, and courteous behaviour, inspire one with a becoming boldness. He has fine eyes, a fair complexion, and a cheerful countenance. They talk much of his generosity, and taste for literature; in a word, he is my hero.

I was afraid the affable manner with which he received me, might have prejudiced me in his favour; but I find every body is of my opinion. We designed to see him dine in public the next day, but the Jacobins, where his quarters are, hinted to us, it was not decent to see the ladies in their convent.

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The deputies of Geneva came to congratulate him, and were present at dinner. The prince, when he sat down to table, called the count de Montjoye to him, and being told we were still at Montmeillan, he asked, why we were not present: He was made acquainted with the scruple of the monks, when he immediately ordered one of his officers to fetch us, and caused it to be signified to the superior, that all places he resided in, must be looked on as royal houses, where every one was to be admitted, without distinction of sex. I must own to you, I could very readily have excused him this testimony of his respect; however, compliance was necessary.

He dined in a little cell; where, only twelve of us, were present, and, unluckily, I was placed just over-against him. This situation so abashed me, at my first sitting down, that I did not dare to look up, but the easy and unreserved manner with which he treated every one present, soon rid me of the constraint I was under, and, I afterwards viewed him with great pleasure.

How surprizing a thing is our love to our princes? I cannot express to you the satisfaction I had in contemplating this grandson of Lewis! I was proud to see the admiration he raised in the deputy, to whom he often directed his discourse, and of whom he ask'd the most sensible questions. The ceremony paid to him was after the manner of the court of Spain, that is to say, kneeling.

He has the good stomach of the Bourbons, and during his meal, which lasted an hour and an half, he did not lose ten minutes. His valet de chambre told us, he drank every morning some broth with leaf gold in it, and they attribute his appetite to that regimen.

A lucky accident had brought Mr. de Sillery to Montmeillant, and, as we were but three, and he came on horseback, the count offered him a place in his coach, which he accepted.

Mr. de Sillery is a venerable old man, who inspires one with respect at first sight. He seemed pleased with my conversation, and desired I would give him leave

to

to visit me sometimes. This request raised in me a thought, to which, God has given a blessing, as you will presently find. I made proper returns to the old gentleman's civility, and told him, I should take great pleasure in his conversation, but desired, that honour might be protracted 'till he had done us the favour of supping with the count de Montjoye, and of procuring me the acquaintance of his wife and daughter. He consented, and the count went immediately to wait on the ladies for their concurrence, who received the invitation with pleasure.

As soon as we got home, cards were called for, and the count took care not to engage me to play, that I might have time to prepare the young lady. For I had told my design to him, as well as to Mr. de Sabran, who did not appear before the old gentleman. I was not named to the ladies; and, mademoiselle de Sillery, being informed by the count of the reason of our meeting, was suddenly taken ill; and this accident was of use, as it furnished me with a pretext to go with her into the garden, to give her a little air.

No sooner were we alone, than she gave a free course to her tears. I did all in my power to comfort her, and I immediately informed her of the arrival of her husband, and of the means I had contrived to establish her future happiness. She embrac'd me a thousand times, and having recovered herself, we returned to the company.

The moment supper was laid on the table, Mr. de Sabran came in booted, who, seeming surprized to see Mr. de Sillery and his family, offered to withdraw. The count got up, and desired he would stay supper, and added, as you seem to know the ladies, they will excuse your dress. As Sabran did not want much pressing, he sat down, and we were very cheerful.

When the dessert was brought in, and the servants were retired, I was informed of the arrival of my little girl, whom I had taken care to dress out to the best advantage. Every one seemed pleased with the child, but none more than Mr. de Sillery, who had taken

taken her in his arms, and would not part with her. The little creature, as if she had known our design, smiled upon the old man, stretched out her little hands to him, and suffered his embraces in the prettiest manner imaginable.

Good God ! what a lovely child it is, (said he, pressing her in his arms) I should grow young again, if I could hope my daughter would bring me such a one. The poor lady, at these words, could scarce refrain from tears ; she was pale and trembling, like a criminal, expecting sentence to be passed. What is the matter with you, daughter, said the father, you are pale as death, does the thought of a husband terrify so greatly ? The confusion I saw her in, made it necessary for me to take up the conversation. The unhappy condition, said I, of this poor child (which I have just now informed the young lady of) has affected her ; she does not belong to me, Sir, added I, and, being the unhappy fruits of a secret marriage, she has no provision made for her, and perhaps will never be owned by those, to whom she has the honour to be allied. How cruel is that, said Mr. de Sillery ; could any one deny being the father of so amiable a creature ? When he had said these words, I arose, and, suffering Mademoiselle de Sillery, who was next me, to pass by, she fell at the father's feet, on the one side, as did Mr. de Sabran, on the other. What is the meaning of all this, said the old gentleman ? Alas ! Madam, what is this, I have a glimpse of ? You have pronounced that unhappy young lady's pardon, said I, putting myself in the same posture with his children ; do not revoke it, but grant to our tears, forgiveness of a fault, for which so fair an excuse is offered.

Mr. de Sillery made me no answer, and did not seem, even, to see me ; the whole company wept aloud, which he took not the least notice of. At last, his eyes overflowed with tears, with which he watered the child's face, and afterwards giving it into his daughter's arms, rise children, said he to them, I did not, 'till this moment, know the power of na-

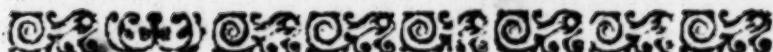
ture. In that instant, Mr. de Sillery cast his eyes on *me*, and, rising with great precipitation, desired me to get up. What treachery, this! said he to me; ah! Madam, could I have suspected *you* of such a contrivance? Come, and embrace an old man, 'tis a punishment due to you, for your artifice? And I, said the countess de Montjoye, will embrace you too, for the good action you have just now done, though 'tis all a riddle to me. And so it is to me, replied Madame de Sillery, and I could be glad to have it expounded. You talk of a secret marriage, which my daughter seems to have a near concern in, pray let me understand you?

Great was this lady's surprize, when the particulars were related to her, as she thought she could have answered for the conduct of one, whom she scarce ever suffered to be out of her sight: However, she was not more inflexible than her husband; they both embraced Mr. de Sabran, whom they called their son, and soon after took proper measures to add to the marriage, all the formalities necessary to make it valid. It was resolved, not to disclose the matter here, but to wait 'till their arrival at Paris, before they made it public.

It is impossible to describe to you, the joy of that family, the gratitude of Mr. de Sabran and his wife, and the tender love of Mr. de Sillery and his spouse for their grand-daughter.

I am, &c.

L E T.



LETTER LXIV.

Madame du MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

I Assure you, dear child, your letter made me, and your father too, shed tears. We admired the resources that nature, or rather Providence, has placed, in the hearts of parents, in behalf of their children: This, my dear, I speak from experience; for never mother loved with greater tenderness. And I am fond of seeing my weakness kept in countenance, by examples, in others, how culpable soever children are, who forget the duty they owe to those that gave them birth. The faults of a child, be they ever so great, a father seldom refuses to pardon. I must, on this occasion, acquaint you with a transaction that lately passed here, in which I acted a principal character.

You know the chevalier d'Ornan: His eldest son, who had been spoiled by his mother, caused him the greatest vexation. About three years ago he went off with a considerable sum of money, which having reduced his father to great difficulties, he swore he never would forgive him. And this resolution he persevered in 'till yesterday, as neither any of his friends, nor even our bishop, who came purposely to visit him, could make the least impression on him.

That son came home, about a fortnight ago, and was concealed in his mother's closet. Madame d'Ornan came to impart to me, her great grief on her son's account, and we contrived to bring about a reconciliation, in the following manner.

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They assembled all the chevalier's family, which is very numerous, (for he has eight children married.) The pretext for the entertainment, was, the birthday of madame d'Ornan, and the guests were thirty-two in number. We found upon the table a young calf, stuffed with poultry, and every one seemed surprised at so uncommon a dish. This is the feast of the father in the gospel, said I, here is the fatted calf, but, where is the prodigal son? At these words, Mr. d'Ornan changed colour, and diverted the discourse; but I made as if I did not perceive it, and continued to talk to him about his son; at last, the chevalier, forgetting the respect he owed to the company, fell into a violent rage; I gave him time to vent his passion, and applauded his resentment, which seemed to appease him. When I found his anger abated, I endeavoured to excite his tenderness, and compassion; for a considerable time, I was doubtful of my success, but at last, I saw his eyes were filled with tears, and judging *that* to be the critical moment, gave the signal agreed on, and the prodigal son was at his father's feet, before he perceived him.

That inflexible parent, no sooner cast his eyes on his son, than the whole father stood confessed in his countenance, and every resentment subsided. He very readily pardoned him; and we passed the rest of the evening in the greatest cheerfulness.

I am delighted with the picture you have drawn of the infant Don Philip, and with the emotions of awe and respect, which you felt at the sight of him. Kings, by the appointment of heaven, are, or ought to be, fathers to their subjects, and we ought to have such an affection for them, as that title demands. But we have no need of instructions on this head, as being distinguished amongst all nations, for our love to those whom Providence has appointed to be our masters.

I am of the same opinion with the count de Montjoye, that the marquis must not know of your visit to Don Philip, as your king will certainly be displeased

A YOUNG LADY. 233

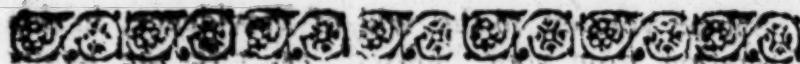
pleased at it, and the whole blame will fall upon *you*.

Submit yourself to the will of Providence, in this separation from your husband, as, after the happy events it has brought about for your justification, you would be inexcusable, not to trust every concern to its guidance.



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L E T.



LETTER LXV.

The MARCHIONESS DE ——, to MADAME DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

YOU will wonder at the news I am about to tell you. My husband and the count are now at Chambéry, in the train of the king of Sardinia. At whose arrival, Don Philip retired, with all his troops, to Fort de Bareau, and not a sword was drawn on either side: Your politicians think there is some mystery in this conduct, which they know not how to unravel, and, which, even to me, seems very extraordinary: You may guess the joy I felt at seeing again a beloved husband, from whom I looked upon to be separated for a tedious time, and to find him convinced of my innocence and affection for him.

He tells me, he will not let a day pass, without asking my pardon for his unjust suspicions; and, he has carried matters so far, as to discharge his servant, who gave rise to them; but, whose cause I have so successfully pleaded, that the marquis has consented to take him again, and I have made the poor fellow a small present, to shew him I have no resentment against him.

I have a thousand times embraced my brother-in-law, whose love for the countess, my sister, is still the same, and he assures me, she is greatly admired by all the Piedmontese ladies. But, in the midst of all my joy, on this happy occasion, I greatly regret the disgrace of one of my best friends: The count de Montjoye,

Montjoye, as a reward for all his care and pains, is loaded with reproaches ; he is become *suspected*. The king would not suffer the marquis d'Avila, the count's father-in-law, to pay his duty to him ; and that old gentleman, stuck with so unexpected a blow, fell dangerously ill. How wide is the difference between the service of God, and that of man ! In the service of the first, we are *sure* to please, if we sincerely intend it ; in the latter, we are left to *guess* what will be acceptable. This thought puts me out of conceit with the court, and so soon as a peace is concluded, and the marquis can quit the service, with honour, my utmost ambition will be to spend the remainder of my life in a peaceful retirement.

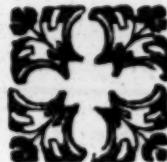
Whilst I was writing this letter, my husband came to inform me, that I am involved in my friend's disgrace. My continuing to visit him, as before, has been alledg'd against me as a crime, as well as that to the infant Don Philip.

The king, who is preparing to pass the mountains, has ordered the marquis to be told, that he would dispense with his attendance on him. This I am not in the least concerned at, having taken so great a dislike to Turin, that, I believe, I shall never get the better of.

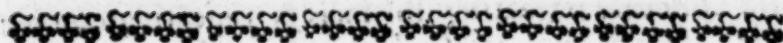
The king departed two days ago, and now the Spaniards are with us again : This is a farce, which we know not what to make of. Don Philip seems to have obtained the king of Sardinia's promise, that he shall not be disturbed in this city ; and he is fixing himself, as if he was to live here for ever.

I proposed to have sent away this letter, two days ago, but an unforeseen accident prevented me. The palace took fire, and was burnt down to the ground ; and, as our house was not far off, we were up the whole night. Luckily we escaped with our fright, and this accident did not interrupt the diversions. Our married ladies engage in them very heartily, and their daughters flatter themselves with the hope of getting

ting them husbands, from amongst the noblemen of Don Philip's train ; and I shall not pity those who take wives from hence, for the better we are acquainted with the Savoyard women, the more we must love them. They are, in general, the best natured, and most sensible people you can imagine. The lovely Sophia, daughter of the countess de Menthon, has made a conquest of a very amiable young Spaniard, and it is supposed the affair will conclude with a marriage, in which, each of the parties will have an advantage : The lady, in point of fortune, and the cavalier, in respect to birth and personal good qualities.



L E T.



LETTER LXVI.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

YOU must now summon up and exert your whole submission to the will of Providence.—Your father is no more, and the time, when I shall go again to meet my dear husband, is not far off. This, probably, is the last letter you will receive from me; I wish I could have wrote it with my own hand, but my present weakness prevents me from having that satisfaction. Your father died the death of the righteous; for which I thank my God. I would willingly conceal from you the occasion of his death; but sooner or later you must know it, and it would be only to procrastinate your grief.

A gentleman, living in our neighbourhood, as poor in good qualities, as he is rich in ancestors, came several times to shoot upon our estate: Your unfortunate father, having found him taking this liberty unasked, reproved him for it, and, perhaps a little too roughly; and the abominable wretch, having a fusée, loaded with balls, shot him through the body. He was immediately brought home in a dying condition; and, three peasants having seized the assassin, dragged him to our house almost at the same time. My husband's first care, was to have the villain secured, and to send for his father, with whom we had been at variance for many years. He gave him up his son, presented money to the peasants to engage them to secrecy, and having assembled his children, he made them promise, they would never attempt to revenge his death. After that, he bent all his thoughts on fitting himself to appear in the presence of God.

And,

And, for five days, that he survived his wounds, he did not cease intreating for mercy, repeating continually, *Forgive me, oh God! as I forgive him, who has occasioned my death.* He refused to declare the name of the assassin, to the officers of justice, and, God, to reward him, even in this life, for the sacrifice he has made, has granted him the conversion of his enemy, which he prayed for with great earnestness. The eve of his death, that gentleman's father came to bring a letter from him, dated from the monastery of La Trape, (a) to which he is retired; wherein he intreated my husband, in the most pathetic terms, to forgive him, and protested, the remainder of his life should be devoted to penitence for his crime.

This happy event has in *some* measure lessened my grief, and, I saw your father's last gasp with a fortitude which amazes me: But, spight of my efforts to preserve myself in this disposition of mind, my body sunk under its burden; and, at the same time that my heart patiently submitted to the will of heaven, it was so cruelly tortured, that the very main spring of life is affected.

A slow fever, an impossibility of keeping down any nourishment, are tokens of my approaching dissolution, and, my physician is of opinion, I cannot live above eight days. However, I do not feel any pain, but nature seems quite worn out.

The greatest sacrifice I have to make in quitting this life, is, that I cannot have the satisfaction of embracing you, once more: But, why do I grieve? We shall soon meet again; the *longest* life, is but a *moment*, when compared with *eternity*. I am now sensible of it, my dear child, I have lived but a day, and, have lost the greatest part of it. Nothing is left me but what I have done in obedience to God, and that is a small matter indeed: But, my trust is in his mercy.

Your husband's bounty, has made me quite easy with regard to my children's fortunes, and to your care

(a) A monastery in France, the discipline of which, is extremely rigid.

care I recommend them. Be a mother to them, and above all, omit nothing to confirm them in the fear of God.

It would imbitter my last moments, could I doubt of your constancy, and submission to the divine will on this melancholy occasion. Weep for us like a christian, and, as one, having hopes of a joyful meeting hereafter; but do not hasten that day, by giving yourself up to an unmeasureable grief.

Adieu, my dear child! I have dwelt too long upon this subject, my thoughts should, now, be fixed on God alone, which, your dear remembrance has withheld me from.

The marquis will give you this letter, with whom I hope you will enjoy many peaceful days, which will be a foretaste of that felicity, to which my soul is aspiring, and, which it looks for, through the mercy of him, who is *all* mercy.

I am, &c.

C O N C L U S I O N.

Madame du MONTIER did not die of this sickness: Her daughter set out on receipt of her letter, and found her almost at the point of death; but the sight of so beloved an object, seemed to recal her just departing soul. She retired, with the marchioness, to one of her country seats, where she is now living.

There remain some of her letters to her youngest daughter, which deserve to be made public; but the bounds, prescribed to this work, would not allow of the inserting them.

F I N I S.

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